The Social Contract

Vol. XI, No. 4 Summer 2001

Highlights

Tributes to Donella Meadows by Leon Kolankiewicz and John Tanton.

Discussions of limits to growth by:
John Attarian
John Cairns Jr.
William R. Catton

California's energy crisis is analyzed by Ric Oberlink and Albert A. Bartlett.

Roy Beck testifies before a congressional committee on the failed mission of the INS.

Diana Hull comments on President Bush's proposed amnesty for illegal immigrants from Mexico.

New books are reviewed by Craig Straub, Anne Manetas, David Simcox, Mark Wegierski and Wayne Lutton.

'The Limits to Growth'
Honoring the Memory of Donella Meadows

The Ecuadorean tanker *Jessica*, with a cargo of diesel fuel, run aground off the coast of the environmentally sensitive Galapagos Islands, January 2001. *(Associated Press)*

Ezra Mishan of the London School of Economics explodes popular fallacies about the economic benefits of immigration. See page 256.

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About The Social Contract

The English philosopher John Locke, whose thinking helped inspire the American revolution, said that society should be governed by an understood set of values he termed "the social contract." Under the social contract, governments have obligations to their citizens, and citizens have responsibilities to society.

Most great public issues are basically moral and ethical ones. What is the right thing to do? How do we decide what we think is right? When "rights" collide, which ones take precedence? The concept of the social contract helps us sort out the difficult issues confronting American society today and helps us find balance.

Each quarter, The Social Contract *journal examines trends, events and ideas that could unravel America's delicate social fabric. Key topics addressed by this journal:*

- *Human population issues, including absolute size, rate of growth and distribution. Do cherished American ideals prosper or suffer through further population growth?*
- *Immigration issues. In order to best facilitate meeting the highest goals of the American people, (1) how many immigrants should we admit? (2) who should be admitted, and (3) how can we humanely enforce the rules?*
- *Language, assimilation, culture and national unity considerations. What are the shared values necessary to the maintenance of our social contract?*
- *The balance of individual rights and civic responsibilities. Since the previous issues are so often framed in terms of rights, what are the balancing obligations?*
- *Other nations' efforts at guarding or creating their own social contracts. What practical insight can be gained from observing the failures and successes in nation-building by other societies?*

The Social Contract *explores these complex and interrelated issues with articles varying greatly in outlook and philosophy in the attempt to further vigorous public debate.*

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A Note from the Editor

Another Amnesty and More Guest Workers?

As we go to press, Mexican President Vicente Fox is conducting a triumphal tour of Mexican strongholds in the Midwest. His demands include the "legalization" [i.e. amnesty] of the several million Mexican nationals who entered, and remain in, the United States illegally, along with a massive "guest worker" program. Before leaving Mexico City for his North American expedition, President Fox outlined an ambitious plan to promote further Mexican emigration to the United States, while increasing the ties between Mexico proper and her citizens living abroad [cf. Howard Sutherland, "Mexico Has A Plan for the U.S." published at the internet site: www.VDARE.com, July 16, 2001].

Even before George W. Bush was sworn in as President of the United States, similar proposals were aired in Mexico with President Fox by a delegation of five U.S. Senators, led by Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas), the powerful chairman of the Senate Banking Committee. Gramm and his colleagues Sen. Pete Domenici (R-New Mexico), Jim Bunning (R-Kentucky), Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), and Zell Miller (D-Georgia), promised to sponsor a "guest worker" program that would grant Mexico virtually unlimited access to the U.S. labor market. The "guest worker" proposal would permit as many as eight million Mexicans living illegally in the U.S. to remain here and be given the same rights as American workers. Their plan would grant annually renewable legal permits to Mexican workers—first to those already here illegally, and then to other Mexicans interested in coming to the United States.

At a time when the U.S. economy is slowing down, the "guest worker" program would flood the American market with unskilled workers. Instead of being sent home, as the law provides, millions of illegal aliens would be rewarded by being "legalized."

In addition to the "guest worker" program, the Bush Administration is contemplating granting a general amnesty to illegal aliens from Mexico, whether or not they sign on as guest workers. A number of President Bush's campaign consultants claim that Republicans can "reposition" themselves with Latino voters before the 2004 Presidential election by endorsing an amnesty and guest worker programs. But under the best of circumstances, Republican "strategists" concede, it is unlikely that Bush, or any other Republican, can hope to carry more than 40 percent of the Latino vote. We pointed out in our Spring 2001 issue [theme: "George W. Bush, Last Republican President? And Does It Matter?"] Third World immigrants are not a natural constituency for such traditional Republican planks as tax cuts, welfare reduction, and increased Defense Department spending.

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During a photo-op visit to Ellis Island on July 10, 2001, both President Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft repeated many of the clichés about our history that are standard fare among proponents of mass immigration. Attorney General Ashcroft claimed that the Statute of Liberty is a symbol that America embraces immigration "from all parts of the world" and that Emma Lazarus' poem is "testimony to the uniquely American experience which provide a basis for new Americans finding now just a welcoming, but an unapologetic expression of confidence in the power of freedom. Miss Lazarus did not write, 'Give me your top 10 percent or give me the cream of your crop, give me the merit scholars on the SAT.'"

President Bush, welcoming twenty-nine newly sworn-in citizens at the Ellis Island ceremony, pledged to accelerate the immigration process. "Immigration," he went on, "is not a problem to be solved, it is a sign of a confident and successful nation...This is one of the things that makes our country so unique: With a single oath, all at once you become as fully American as the most direct descendant of a founding father...New citizens bring renewal...We're a diverse country and getting more diverse, and these virtues—self-government, our sense of duty, loyalty, self-confidence and regard for the common good—are what keeps this great country together. Believing in them and living by them, this great land will always be united."

Attorney General Ashcroft is apparently unaware that the statue, officially titled *Liberty Enlightening the World*, was raised not as a symbol to immigration, but as a testimony to what the project's nineteenth-century French sponsors saw as the remarkable success of America's republican institutions. They hoped that similar democratic customs would take hold elsewhere around the world.

President Bush revealed that he has an even poorer grasp of the issues at stake than did his predecessor, Bill Clinton. Like the former Soviet Union, and the Habsburg Empire in the early 20th century, America is rife with ethnic strife. And the sheer numbers of immigrants (and their descendants) who have arrived over the past thirty-five years contribute to environmental costs and resource stress. As in our past, when waves of in-migration were followed by strict curtailment, a time-out from mass immigration is required to enable us to address a host of population-related concerns.

While the public remains unconvinced about the benefits of an amnesty or guest worker program, special interests are vigorously pushing this agenda. Those of us involved in these issues have a lot of work to do.

WAYNE LUTTON, Ph.D.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

In his speech at Ellis Island on July 10, 2001, President Bush said: "Immigration is not a problem to be solved. It is the sign of a confident and successful nation." That is like saying: "Drinking while driving is not a problem to be solved. It is the sign of a confident and successful individual." Or: "Incessantly eating more food than you can digest is not a problem to be solved. It is a sign of happiness and enjoyment of life." Or: "Destroying every familiar and historical aspect of your society is not a problem to be solved. It is a sign of confidence and faith in the future." Or: "Submitting yourself to an operation in which your face, your body, your blood, your brain and your soul are all replaced by a different face, body, blood, brain and soul is not a problem to be solved. It is a sign of adventurousness and the love of freedom."

LAWRENCE AUSTER
New York, New York

Editor:

As a veteran and cop I am very concerned with what is occurring in our country and especially in the southwestern states and cities.

There are vehicle theft rings, drug rings, burglary rings, and more, operating here causing the death of American citizens as well as murdering police officers at an increased rate. Can you imagine what else has come across this border — reference possible terrorist activity? And if it has not happened yet it is only a matter of time. Over one million a year are crossing over undetected. Are they all helpless women and children? I don't think so. With ever increasing frequency cops are being murdered by individuals that don't even belong here. Just recently a Phoenix officer was ambushed by three Mexican males who flagged him down on the side of the road then opened fire on him. They drove away in a vehicle with Mexico plates. There was absolutely no provocation for this attack. I have been a cop here for over ten years and have had to release almost every illegal I have come across because the INS has told me to. This has even happened with illegals that possessed assault rifles.

JOHN FRIELING
Phoenix, Arizona

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Donella Meadows

In tribute to a departed sustainability pioneer, scientist, prophet, farmer, writer, teacher

by Leon Kolankiewicz

This past February, one of the guiding lights of the movement for an environmentally sustainable society, nation, and planet was abruptly extinguished. Donella Meadows, 59, died in New Hampshire after a brief but hard-fought struggle with cerebral meningitis.

Dr. Meadows was a scientist, educator, farmer, and syndicated columnist, in addition to filling many other roles that mattered at least as much — daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, friend, and colleague. But to the world at large and to posterity, she will most be remembered and appreciated as an intellectually courageous, indefatigable pioneer on the frontiers of the search and struggle for sustainability. Her vision of a sustainable world was one of a just society in ecological equilibrium with earthly limits, one that avoided the ravages of the "overshoot and crash" catastrophe toward which many environmental scientists believe humanity is hurtling. In this, Meadows was an inspiration to many thousands of sustainability advocates around the world.

Donella Meadows
1941-2001
Photo by Medora Hebert
Valley News, Lebanon, NH

Dr. Meadows, known as "Dana" to friends and colleagues, was one of those extraordinary individuals whom historians will credit with having helped found a movement of long-term import. She will be compared to the likes of Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson. Their seminal works, *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) and *Silent Spring* (1962), are now regarded as classics in the conservation and environmental fields. And like Meadows, these two pioneers died before their time. Leopold perished while fighting a brush fire in Wisconsin even before *Almanac* appeared, and Carson succumbed to cancer (which she is said to have suspected was attributable to the very environmental toxins she wrote about) just a year after *Silent Spring* was published.

In Dana's case, while her book catapulted her to prominence, unlike Leopold and Carson, she had the good fortune to survive the publication of her own landmark work by nearly three decades and was able to defend, build on, and update its message. In 1972, barely thirty and barely out of graduate school, she was the lead author of *The Limits to Growth* (co-authored with Dennis L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III), which sold more than nine million copies and was translated into twenty-eight languages. This small book that packed a big wallop was a report for the Club of Rome's project on "the predicament of mankind" with its interrelated social, economic, and political problems: poverty amidst prosperity, environmental degradation, unchecked urban sprawl, loss of faith in institutions, alienation of youth, inflation, insecurity of employment, and rejection of traditional values. The club came to call this complex the "world problematique."

In the summer of 1970, the Club of Rome held meetings and workshops in Bern, Switzerland, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and began its project on the predicament of mankind. With the financial assistance of the Volkswagen Foundation, the club

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***Leon Kolankiewicz** is an environmental planner and co-author (with Roy Beck) of* Forsaking Fundamentals: The Environmental Establishment Abandons U.S. Population Stabilization, *Center for Immigration Studies, Center Paper 18, March 2001.*

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commissioned Professor Jay Forrester and a team headed by Dennis Meadows (Dana's then-husband) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to apply a computer model simulating and integrating specific components of the "problematique." Originally designed by Forrester, this model incorporated principles from the emerging field of system dynamics and was described in his 1971 book *World Dynamics*.

The Limits to Growth concluded that:

> *If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next one hundred years. The most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity.*

This conclusion — that on a round, finite planet there just might be limits to the expansion of "the human enterprise" — is one that should seem at least plausible if not intuitively obvious to anyone with a modicum of scientific or mathematical training. As Dana Meadows herself commented years later to an interviewer, "From my point of view as a scientist, there was nothing more stupidly obvious than to say that the earth is finite and growth can't go on forever." Yet this simple finding caused a furor in 1972, in part because it seemed to be bolstered by the unbiased analysis of a super-smart computer. "COMPUTER PREDICTS WORLD COLLAPSE" screamed one newspaper headline; "A COMPUTER LOOKS AHEAD AND SHUDDERS" cried another. *Limits* provoked a firestorm of criticism, ridicule, and vitriol from the business, economic, political, and even academic establishments, as well as not a little acclaim and applause from a rising number of doubting Thomases who for some years had been growing more and more troubled by ever-increasing human influence over the biosphere.

Donella H. Meadows was born March 13, 1941 in Elgin, Illinois. She was educated in the sciences, earning a B.A. in chemistry from Carleton College in 1963 and a Ph.D. in biophysics from Harvard University in 1968. From there she joined MIT as a research fellow under Jay Forrester, the founder of system dynamics as well as the principle of magnetic data storage for computers.

Now even an objective, complex computer model seemed to be saying that not only would nature succumb to human excess, but that human civilization itself, having overshot the carrying capacity of the environment that supported it, would collapse into a dreadful Malthusian dystopia of prolonged shortages and suffering. And that this breakdown would occur even *without* a single nuclear bomb exploding. It was scary stuff. For those who believed wholeheartedly in the secular religion of perpetual growth and endless human and technological potential, it was also heretical. Since these particular doomsayers were not kooks in sandals and robes carrying "The End Is Near" signs but scientists and scholars from one of the nation's most prestigious universities, underwritten by an international club with impressive credentials, the challenge to orthodoxy could not be ignored.

As a college student in the 1970s, majoring in the environmental sciences, I remember clearly how unrealistic the conventional projections of future demand for natural resource commodities seemed to me. Up, up, up they went, with nary a hint that anything could or should ever limit their inexorable ascent. This was true of timber, paper, metals, other minerals, fish harvest, electricity, oil, coal, gas, uranium, food, water, land for airports, highways and cities, and so forth. It was also true of economic output and "residuals" (or waste generation). Their growth was assumed to be perpetual. Questions like, "How long can this line on this graph continue to go up?" were met with blank stares. Thus, when I discovered *Limits*, it was like a refreshing breeze of truth, logic, and reality dispelling growthmania's fumes of delusion. Even as I acknowledged that some of *Limits'* critics might be at least partially correct — namely that the book underestimated the potential of technology and misconstrued what constitutes resources — for me and many others, *The Limits to Growth* was groundbreaking and brilliant. Its essential truth was unassailable.

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Yet *Limits was* assailed. And the ferocity of the assault caught Dana Meadows by surprise: "I was simply astounded at the number and power and loudness of people who wouldn't accept..." the idea of limits. "They couldn't allow that book to stand. They threw everything at it they could think of. There's a deep belief that growth is always good," she said later.

All but lost in the controversy were the cautiously optimistic second and third conclusions of *The Limits to Growth*:

> *It is possible to alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future. The state of global equilibrium could be designed so that the basic material needs of each person on earth are satisfied and each person has an equal opportunity to realize his individual human potential.*
>
> *If the world's people decide to strive for this second outcome rather than the first, the sooner they begin working to attain it, the greater will be their chances of success.*

As Dana herself wrote many years later:

> *We didn't think we had written a prediction of doom. We had intended to issue a warning, but also a vision. We saw, with the help of the computer, not one future but many, all possible, some terrible, some terrific.*

This stubborn hope in the face of grim trends was pure Dana. In the clearest indication that the conclusions of *Limits* weren't merely an academic exercise for her, Dana Meadows dedicated the rest of her life to working on behalf of this "sustainable outcome."

The fuss over *Limits* eventually receded and all sides moved on, claiming intellectual victory. (The Earth itself withheld judgment, although numerous adverse environmental trends suggested that the Day of Reckoning was still forthcoming.) In Dana's case, she moved over to Dartmouth College, where she taught environmental systems, ethics, and journalism for the next twenty-nine years. In 1981, she and former husband Dennis Meadows co-founded the International Network of Resource Information Centers (INRIC), also called the Balaton Group, named for the lake in Hungary where INRIC meets. Serving 18 years as its coordinator, Dana led the group's efforts to facilitate valuable exchanges of information between scientists from East and West during the Cold War. These collaborative efforts eventually included hundreds of leaders in the broader sustainability movement, activists and scholars alike.

"While Donella Meadows researched and wrote about global problems, she herself also practiced local solutions, a living personification of Rene Dubos' famous expression, 'Think Globally, Act Locally.'"

Dr. Meadows received invitations to teach and lecture throughout the world. She also served on numerous national and international boards and scientific committees. For example, she served on the board of the Center for a New American Dream, a new non-profit organization focused on consumption issues whose motto is "Less Stuff, More Fun." She received a 1991 Pew Scholarship and a 1994 MacArthur Fellowship (its "genius grant") in support of her work. Although she had earned a Ph.D. more than two decades earlier, in 1992 the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) presented her with an honorary doctorate in recognition of her achievements. And yet from all accounts, the acclaim did not go to her head. As one admirer wrote, "Genuinely unconcerned with her international fame, she often referred to herself simply as 'a farmer and a writer.'"

While Donella Meadows researched and wrote about global problems, she herself also practiced local solutions, a living personification of Rene Dubos' famous expression, "Think Globally, Act Locally." A eulogy by Alan Atkisson last February at the First Presbyterian Church in Morehead City, North Carolina, mentioned that Dana's worries about climate change made her restrict her own travel. She attended

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only those events at which she felt her physical presence would do the most good, thus holding down her own contributions to rising carbon dioxide emissions. She also lived for many years on an organic farm, "living simply, saving energy, practicing what she believed must be preached." She bought a hybrid gas/electric car as soon as they became available.

Dana's commitment to the simple things in life is tellingly illustrated in an anecdote by Fran Korten, executive director of the Positive Futures Network:

> *My [first] encounter with Dana was at a presentation at Harvard of the model on which* The Limits to Growth *was based. Dana was the book's primary author, but it was [husband] Dennis who made the presentation. Dana sat in the audience – knitting. I was a young professional woman, struggling in a man's world, and the scene raised the hackles of my budding feminist consciousness.*
>
> *Twenty years later, [we] were visiting Dana at her farm in New Hampshire...We had a lively discussion about the relative contribution of population and consumption to the pressures on the Earth's ecological systems. While we talked, Dana was spinning wool shorn from the lambs on her farm. This time, my hackles were happily quiescent. I had come to deeply appreciate this woman who could not only think about the limits to growth but live her life within them.*

A memorial service to celebrate Dana's life was held on Earth Day, 2001, in Washington, D.C., one of a number around the country and overseas. Colleagues and friends who had known her personally — like ecological economist Herman Daly, Worldwatch Institute founder Lester Brown, and Center for a New American Dream executive director Betsy Taylor — fondly recalled their own memories of Dana, and the down-to-earth wisdom and serenity of this remarkable woman, who embodied both the most profound and practical of considerations. After rejecting religion as foolish early in her scientific career, Dana had undergone a spiritual reawakening, realizing that she was a "frail instrument" and needed to call upon a higher power. She was fond of the divine music of handbell choirs, and one from a nearby church opened the Washington memorial service with a lovely rendition of *Spirit Song* and closed it with *Let All Things Now Living*, a Welsh folk melody.

In 1997, Dr. Meadows founded the Sustainability Institute, which she described as a "think-do-tank." The Institute combines cutting-edge research on global economic and environmental systems as well as practical demonstrations of sustainable living, including the development of an ecological village and organic farm named Cobb Hill in Hartland Four Corners, Vermont. Cobb Hill is a co-housing community whose residents live in individual solar-powered, energy-efficient homes but engage in common activities like weekend dinners, gardening, yoga classes, volleyball, and child care. The community includes a dairy farm, maple sugar business, orchards, and organic gardens that supply many local homes and restaurants.

For sixteen years, Dana wrote a weekly syndicated column entitled "The Global Citizen," which appeared in more than twenty newspapers and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1991. The *Utne Reader* called it "a weekly installment of fresh thinking about environmental, economic, and social issues ...delightfully eclectic, ranging from provocative assertions that a soaring stock market is not necessarily good news, to thoughtful praise for public libraries, ladybugs, and Pad Thai (as one example of ecofriendly peasant food from around the world that tastes great without a lot of meat or imported ingredients)."

Yet "The Global Citizen" was not a single-minded proponent of One World, open-borders globalization. In April 1998, during a bitter, internecine fight within the Sierra Club over whether that organization should adopt a comprehensive U.S. population stabilization policy that included a commitment both to fertility and immigration reductions, Donella Meadows devoted one of her columns to the sensitive issue. Noting that "there can be virtuous or selfish reasons to be on either side," Meadows wrote, "I'm bothered by folks who claim noble reasons for their own side and assume the worst of the other side." She continued, "I'm also bothered by the numbers. I wish the whole debate would go on with more knowledge of and respect for the numbers."

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She then went on to discuss "the numbers." After enumerating the USA's dwindling old-growth forests, tall-grass prairies, wetlands, aquifers, soils, croplands, and species of wild plants and animals, as well as its growing waste dumps and toxic materials, the column observed: "Any land whose resource stocks are dropping while its pollution sinks are filling is, by definition, being used beyond its carrying capacity. Some number of people at some standard of living in any nation is too many. We don't help either the rich or the poor by going beyond that number." While Dana did not explicitly weigh in on one side or the other of the Sierra Club debate, the drift of her column was clear: a nation has a right, even an obligation, to keep its population within its carrying capacity.

This column led to my first and only personal conversation with Dana Meadows. As one who had vigorously promoted a comprehensive approach to U.S. population stabilization, first within the Sierra Club's large Los Angeles Chapter population committee in the early nineties, and later as coordinator for the Carrying Capacity Network (which included many Sierra Club members), I had participated actively in this long-running dispute. I telephoned Dana in New Hampshire to thank her both for addressing the issue in the first place — since many environmentalists shied away from it because of its very touchiness and emotion — and then for her even-handed, "numerate" and "ecolate" (in Garrett Hardin's terms) approach to it. She was gracious in response, and in turn thanked us for our efforts to force the Club and the nation to face up to overpopulation.

On the twentieth anniversary of *The Limits to Growth*, in 1992, Dana and original co-authors Dennis Meadows and Jørgen Randers published *Beyond the Limits*. Plugging updated data into the World3 computer model they had used two decades earlier, the team once again explored the world problematique. Here is what they found:

> *...When we looked again at the data, the computer model, and our own experience of the world, we realized that in spite of the world's improved technologies, the greater awareness, [and] the stronger environmental policies, many resource and pollution flows had grown beyond sustainable limits.*
>
> *...We discovered, as we began to talk to colleagues about the world being "beyond the limits," that they did not really question that conclusion.*

Indeed, some problems, like stratospheric ozone depletion from manmade chemicals, had not even been diagnosed when the original *Limits* was published. The magnitude of other threats, like acid rain, the biodiversity/extinction crisis, and climate change from the accumulation of greenhouse gases, had only been surmised in1972. By the 1990s there was much stronger evidence of accelerating human overshoot of environmental carrying capacity.

Yet by and large, these unfolding problems, however dire, had not yet begun to forcefully and unmistakably obstruct further human expansion, by means of what systems analysts call "negative feedback." Indeed, the last three decades have witnessed unprecedented increases in human numbers, resource use, and waste generation, in tandem with economic growth and rising wealth; overall, the aggregate human economy has more than doubled its physical presence on earth. This success encouraged many skeptics of the limits to growth thesis, the best-known of whom was the late Julian Simon.

Professor Simon argued that not only has human welfare been improving, it promises to do so indefinitely, because human ingenuity, if given the freedom to operate, will always find ways of solving shortages, limits, and problems. Obituaries published after Dr. Meadows' death largely echoed Simon, implying that *The Limits to Growth* had been discredited. Actually, most economists never accepted its conclusions in the first place and most ecologists (and other scientists) never rejected them.

Meanwhile, humanity at large is all but oblivious to the debate, continuing to multiply both in population and consumption, raising its resource "throughput," exerting ever-greater influence within and strains on the ecosphere. This spring, electrical blackouts began rolling across California, the most populous, wealthiest, and one of the most environmentally aware states in the third-most-populous, wealthiest nation on earth. Of all places, this is precisely where one would have expected and hoped residents and leaders would have been able to finally

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realize "enough is enough" — yet *no one* in officialdom or the media asked, "But what about generating even more greenhouse gas emissions that will further exacerbate climate change?" as they tripped over themselves to streamline the environmental permitting process and weaken environmental standards in order to bring new power plants on-line ASAP.

In one of her final essays, Dana wrote that, "I've grown impatient with the kind of debate we used to have about whether the optimists or the pessimists are right. Neither are right. There is too much bad news to justify complacency. There is too much good news to justify despair." Dana had the enviable ability to maintain her inner serenity and her faith in the better angels of human nature, even in the face of the terrifying trends and scenarios she was all too familiar with. In part, her hope stemmed from the fact that, in one sense, we really had no choice *but* to conform with ecological reality.

Asked, "What is your greatest source of hope that society can shift to more responsible patterns of production and consumption and achieve a sustainable future?" she answered:

> *The fact that we have to. If we don't choose to, the planet will make us. And the fact that our lives will be better if we do. It isn't sacrifice we're selling, it's a more meaningful, time-filled, love-filled, nature-filled existence. So, as Herman Daly says, we are about to be hit by the hammer of necessity, but we are cradled on the anvil of desirability. We have no choice but to conform.*

Another of Dana's last columns poignantly expressed her deepest concerns and steadfast hopes. Entitled "Polar Bears and Three-Year-Olds on Thin Ice" the February 2, 2001, "Global Citizen" column recounted the dual threats Arctic wildlife faces from pollution and the thinning and shrinking of the Arctic ice cap from global warming:

> *Some biologists are saying the polar bear is doomed.*
>
> *A friend of mine, in response to this news, did the only appropriate thing. She burst out weeping. "What am I going to tell my three-year-old?" she sobbed. Any of us still in contact with our hearts and souls should be sobbing with her, especially when we consider that the same toxins that are in the bears are in the three-year-old. And that the three-year-old over her lifetime may witness collapsing ecosystems, north to south, until all creatures are threatened, especially top predators like polar bears and people.*
>
> *Is there any way to end this column other than in gloom? Can I give my friend, you, myself any honest hope that our world will not fall apart? Does our only possible future consist of watching the disappearance of the polar bear, the whale, the tiger, the elephant, the redwood tree, the coral reef, while fearing for the three-year-old?*
>
> *Heck, I don't know. There's only one thing I do know. If we believe that it's effectively over, that we are fatally flawed, that the most greedy and short-sighted among us will always be permitted to rule, that we can never constrain our consumption and destruction, that each of us is too small and helpless to do anything, that we should just give up and enjoy our SUVs while they last, well, then yes, it's over. That's the one way of believing and behaving that gives us a guaranteed outcome.*
>
> *Personally I don't believe that stuff at all. I don't see myself or the people around me as fatally flawed. Everyone I know wants polar bears and three-year-olds in our world. We are not helpless and there is nothing wrong with us except the strange belief that we are helpless and there's something wrong with us. All we need to do, for the bear and ourselves, is to stop letting that belief paralyze our minds, hearts, and souls.*

Dana Meadow's soul — as well as her keen mind and her gentle wisdom — will be sorely missed in the coming years as the struggle for sustainability intensifies, with an uncertain outcome. But her research and writings, as well as her own personal example, helped move thousands of followers and admirers beyond paralysis. ■

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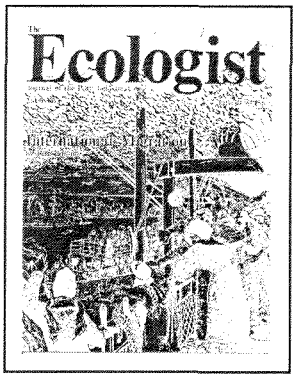
A Memorial Note for Donella Meadows

by John H. Tanton

Cast your bread upon the waters....
...for after many days you will find it again.[1]

Donella and Dennis Meadows were co-authors of the 1972 book *The Limits to Growth*. It was tremendously influential, as testified to by the twenty-six languages into which it was translated and the nine million copies that were sold. In a way that Dr. Meadows never knew, it had a marked effect on my life and upon the immigration reform movement.



After working in the sixties on the "population problem" I began to notice immigration as a significant and growing portion of the U.S. demographic dynamic. This was reinforced by the 1972 "Report of the Rockefeller Commission on Population Growth and the American Future" that devoted a chapter to immigration. I began to collect materials on the topic, hoping at some point to find someone to write the subject up, as I did not fancy myself a writer. No one surfaced.

Then, while reading *Science* magazine, I chanced to notice an ad soliciting entries for the Mitchell Prize competition to be held at the Woodlands resort in Houston, Texas, in connection with the first biennial Limits to Growth conference.[2] Oilman and developer of the Woodlands George Mitchell had read the Meadows' book, thought it significant, and agreed to sponsor five biennial conferences on the topic in conjunction with The Club of Rome. These meetings were to include an essay contest with a first prize of $10,000 — big money back in the mid-seventies. The papers were to "encourage international research and debate on problems inherent in the transition from growth to equilibrium of population, material consumption, and energy use." Yes, Virginia, people actually thought and talked like that back then!

I pulled myself together and submitted the required abstract, and to my great surprise was picked as one of the twelve finalists. I subsequently won third prize ($3,000) for my paper, "International Migration as an Obstacle to Achieving World Stability."[3]

One of my fellow contestants was Edward Goldsmith, editor of the British periodical *The Ecologist* (and brother to financier Sir James Goldsmith, editor of *The Case against the Global Economy and for a Turn toward the Local).* He liked my paper well enough that he ran it as the cover story of the July 1976 issue of his journal. This gave me the credible reprint I needed to begin broaching the idea of re-examining U.S. immigration policy.

I was serving as national president of Zero Population Growth at the time. ZPG studied the issue, tested the waters, but ultimately decided not to take it on. To this day ZPG exemplifies the "cognitive dissonance" of arguing for stabilizing U.S. population while refusing to take a position on the single largest component of U.S. population growth: immigration.

With several refugees from the ZPG board I established the Federation for American Immigration

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Reform (FAIR), which opened for business on January 2, 1979, and is still in the midst of the controversy over migration policy.

This is not the place to argue the immigration issue. Rather I hope to make the point that when people like the Meadowses — or any of us — release our work it is very hard to envision where it will end up and what influences it will have. Hence the allusion to the Biblical phrase about "casting one's bread upon the water" and seeing where it comes to rest.

In this case, the Meadows' work led directly to the Mitchell conferences, to my paper, and on to the formation of FAIR. This in turn has influenced policy debates that have real-world effects on the lives of millions of people — I do not overstate the case. Whether the Meadowses would have approved this chain of events I do not know. Life is hard to predict, and even harder to manage.

Dr. Donella Meadows died on 20 February 2001 of staphylococci meningitis. I will miss her, even though we were not acquainted. Cut off in her most productive years — she was just approaching 60 — she was adjunct professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College and director of the Sustainability Institute in Hartland Four Corners, Vermont.[4] Memorial services were held on Earth Day weekend in San Francisco, California; Whidbey Island, Washington; Talaquoa, Oklahoma; Washington, D.C.; Boston Massachusetts; and Hanover, New Hampshire.

For our memorial we reprint here her last article from the 20 April 2001 issue of *Grist* magazine. ■

NOTES

1. Ecclesiastes 11:1-2.

2. Ad from *Science*, Vol. 186, No. 4167, 6 December 1974.

3. *The Ecologist*, Vol. 6, No. 6, July 1976, p. 221-227.

4.The Sustainability Institute, P.O. Box 174, Hartland Four Corners, VT 05049, www.sustainer.org.

Computer Predicts World Collapse

Author looks back on the storm following book

by Donella Meadows

[***Donella Meadows*** *was an adjunct professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College and director of the Sustainability Institute in Hartland, VT. She died on 20 Feb. 2001. This column is excerpted from her story about writing The Limits to Growth in 1972. Limits was translated into twenty-six languages and sold more than nine million copies. Visit the Sustainability Institute website (www.sustainer.org) for more information on continuing the work that Meadows began.*]

I was one of the team of people at MIT who wrote a book that created a worldwide burst of media foreboding. It began as a small report. Within a few months we were reading headlines like the one above with complete astonishment.

We didn't think we had written a prediction of doom. We had intended to issue a warning, but also a vision. We saw, with the help of the computer, not one future but many, all possible, some terrible, some terrific.

In the introduction to *The Limits to Growth*, we listed three main conclusions, one of danger, one of hope, and one of urgency. The press picked up only the first and the third: If the present growth trends in world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limits to growth on this planet will be reached sometime within the next hundred years.

It is possible to alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future.

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If the world's people decide to strive for this second outcome rather than the first, the sooner they begin working to attain it, the greater will be their chances of success.

You wouldn't think such simple conclusions would stir up much of a fuss, but the fuss was incredible. The storm went on for years. It inspired conferences, studies, books of denial, and books of affirmation and elaboration. Eventually, like all media-generated storms, this one settled back down.

Later, people who remembered *Limits* began asking me: Is this it? Are we running into the limits to growth? Were you right after all?

The question "Were you right?" bothered me. It is the wrong question. One can only be right or wrong if one has made a prediction. We didn't do that. We offered a choice, and people heard a pronouncement of doom.

Are we pushing the limits?

Since we wrote *Limits*, the human economy has more than doubled its physical presence, from vehicles to electric power plants to garbage. At the same time, there has been great erosion of the planetary resource base. Species, forests, wetlands, soils, and habitats have been lost, buffers and degrees of protection have decreased, options have narrowed.

I have spent the past twenty years immersed in statistics that de-scribe this decline. I've watched them unfold. I've presented them to classes and to audiences many times and in a calm tone of voice. I haven't cried over them. I haven't yelled in outrage.

That's because of psychic numbing, I'm sure. I haven't been hit all at once, as I was the first time I saw the birth-rate graph. Watching the numbers slowly get worse is like watching a child grow up — or a better analogy would be watching someone die of a wasting disease.

Exponential growth of population and physical capital, exponential depletion of resources, and degradation of the environment are not necessary to the human condition. But collectively we have been behaving as if they were. Growth is still the pattern of the human system. As yet no corrective processes have been strong enough to stop it. But there are signs of such processes. The good news is that some are coming from human ingenuity and restraint. The bad news is that some are coming from environmental breakdown.

There is a bright side

I've grown impatient with the kind of debate we used to have about whether optimists or the pessimists are right. Neither are right. There is too much bad news to justify complacency. There is too much good news to justify despair.

I am not afraid of the challenge of easing the throughput of human society back down within its limits — I think that can be done fairly easily and even with considerable benefit to the human quality of life. I am afraid of what the world might do with the idea that we are beyond the limits. I have already experienced the hostility, denial, and ridicule engendered by the idea that there are limits. I would expect more of the same from the idea that those limits are already exceeded.

Even worse than denial or ridicule would be simpleminded, uncritical, hysterical acceptance. I can see the headlines now: BEYOND THE LIMITS: COLLAPSE IS COMING or BEYOND THE LIMITS: POPULATION, STANDARD OF LIVING MUST BE CUT.

Those are the two worst possible conclusions to jump to. The first confuses trend with destiny again, leaps at prediction, denies choice. The second recognizes only the most dramatic, conflictual, and violent of the possible responses to a state of overshoot.

To ease my fear, to set the record straight, to forestall the destructive headlines, let me write my own headlines in even larger type:

OVERSHOOT DOES NOT MEAN COLLAPSE
and
MATERIAL AND ENERGY THROUGHPUT MUST BE CUT, BUT NOT PEOPLE, NOT LIVING STANDARDS, NOT THE DREAM OF A BETTER WORLD.

■

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Reactions to Unwelcome Knowledge

by William R. Catton Jr.

Although I never met Donella Meadows, almost immediately after publication of *The Limits to Growth* I heard about her work. A young New Zealander, Guy Salmon, whom I met at a population conference in Wellington, mentioned that book with deep concern about its message. He had been to Stockholm at the time of the 1972 Conference on the Human Environment, convened by the United Nations with the hope of working out some way to prevent our only Earth from being rendered less and less capable of supporting more and more billions of human beings. My already keen anxiety about the effects of our population explosion (at a time when world numbers were just approaching four billion — over two billion more have been added since) was shared by Mr. Salmon. For him that first Report to the Club of Rome, by Meadows et al., documented humanity's dire prospect if global population were to continue increasing at nearly two percent per annum.

Impact of the Meadows Studies

The Limits to Growth (Meadows et al. 1972) became a widely influential document and spurred a worldwide controversy about the future. How much larger could world population grow, and how much longer could economic growth continue? The book's publication nurtured awareness of the immediacy of need for a change of course. An eventual transition to steady state ecological relations between the human population and the biosphere could well be too late. But the Meadows group also made clear that coping with the problems of transition would require actions that would violate conventional wisdom as well as current values.

If the general public rather vaguely recognized something called "the postwar baby boom," people generally tended to assume only such countries as India and China might realistically have to worry about "overpopulation." That word was customarily enclosed in quotation marks to suggest it represented a questionable notion. After all, in America there were still enormous open spaces. A popular song had not seemed implausible after World War II in demanding, "Give me land, lots of land...Don't fence me in." People assumed that the global environment was so huge it could accommodate all our progeny and also function as a universal sink into which anyone had a perfect right to empty wastes of all kinds. The folly of that assumption was elegantly portrayed in 1968 by Garrett Hardin in his paper "The Tragedy of the Commons," appearing in *Science* magazine.

With the advent of computer technology, early warnings about the consequences of unrestricted population growth and associated environmental degradation, often seen as "doomsday prophecies," called for devising models to test their validity. Scientists at the Sloan School of Management at MIT worked out implications of such models under sponsorship by a group of concerned businessmen called the Club of Rome. Application of system dynamics computer models to social systems was initiated by J. W. Forrester, who described the procedure in his books *Urban Dynamics* (1969) and *World Dynamics* (1971). The Forrester-Meadows series of world models outlined in *The Limits to Growth* received great initial publicity, and then more detailed discussion in *Toward Global Equilibrium* (1973).

These individuals were pioneering holistic study of the human predicament. Earlier ecological warnings had tended to focus on or became identified with one particular limit to growth. For Osborn (1953) the problem was depletion of natural resources. For Carson (1962) it was pollution by careless or

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excessive use of chemicals. For Ehrlich (1968) it was population growth. Polemics of that sort were vulnerable to counter arguments exaggerating human adaptability and claiming problems could always be solved by "finding" new resources.

By identifying a range of important interactive connections among a number of basic variables, the World3 computer model sought to reveal the cumulative effects of these on-going interactions. Runs of the model seemed to show that a "strategy of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul would not work much longer" (Ophuls and Boyan 1992, p. 41).

A few years later, using a similar approach, *The Global 2000 Report to the President* (1980) came to the same conclusion. Later still, the World Commission on Environment and Development, headed by Norway's Prime Minister, issued a report entitled *Our Common Future* (1987) which found unsustainable the current rates of economic development and environmental degradation.

Vienna-born sociologist Paul Neurath (1994) has described the views of critics who charged that these studies were based on excessively pessimistic Malthusian assumptions about the alleged limits, and that the assumptions determined their outcomes. With supposedly "more reasonable" (i.e., optimistic) assumptions about the dynamics of populations, about the availability of resources, and about technology for pollution-control, etc., entirely different conclusions could result, they insisted. The Reagan administration shrugged off *The Global 2000 Report* as a "doom and gloom" document and inflicted budget cuts upon the agencies that had prepared it (Ophuls and Boyan 1992, p. 42). However, such retaliation against infidels could not eradicate the problems cited in the report.

Economist Robert Heilbroner (1974, pp. 127, 132) had said that humanity was "entering a period in which rapid population growth, the presence of obliterative weapons, and dwindling resources" would result in perilous international tensions. The danger would not subside, he said, unless we somehow achieved population equilibrium and the distribution of wealth in the world somehow became more equitable. He doubted these changes would be accomplished in time. We were more likely to undergo what he termed "convulsive change" resulting not from calculation but from catastrophe. "As with Malthus's much derided but all too prescient forecasts, nature will provide the checks, if foresight and 'morality' do not."

As a sociologist, I have devoted much of my attention in recent years to a reconsideration of a thesis expounded by Emile Durkheim (1893 [1984]). He expected division of labor in human societies to mitigate competition. He invoked increasing population density as a force that would foster division of labor and thus limit the range of anyone's competitive relations to members of one's own specialty. However, since he published those ideas, world population has so multiplied that the intensification of competition has, I am convinced, far exceeded any power of occupational specialization and differentiation to mitigate it.

"The Reagan administration shrugged off The Global 2000 Report as a 'doom and gloom' document."

Meanwhile, my involvement with the issue required a growing acquaintance with the literature of ecology. The multivariate studies by the Meadows group began to lift some sociologists who read them out of a disciplinary rut. The more we studied the writings of eminent academic ecologists, the more a colleague and I became convinced of the fact that all populations of organisms use environments to serve not one but three functions (Dunlap and Catton 1992-93). Metabolism requires that every living population, human or not, must have a Supply depot, Activity space, and a Disposal site. It may be "SAD," but it is a fact that the potential for mutual interference among these three environmental functions, S, A, and D, grows as a population outgrows a finite abode. Each additional billion humans thus accentuates the finiteness of our planet.

The late British-born ecologist, Arthur S. Boughey, head of Environmental and Population Studies at the University of California, Irvine, from 1965 to 1978, cited extensively (and favorably) at

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various places in his 1976 book, *Strategy for Survival*, the work of "the Meadows group" with its World3 model. He linked its influence with a number of other works that appeared before and after it. Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968), he said, had helped revive attention to warnings about overpopulation that trace back to Adam Smith, T. R. Malthus, and David Ricardo. Preceding both the Ehrlich book and the work of the Meadows group, there was a serious warning of environmental deterioration by Rachel Carson. Her *Silent Spring* (1962), had shown how unrestricted use of broad-spectrum pesticides was enormously fraught with environmental side-effects. Barry Commoner (1972) broadened that issue in *The Closing Circle*, examining the impacts of industrial pollution, and industrial society's perilous reliance on nonrenewable resources. Together, such books as these compelled reconsideration of long-held assumptions.

System dynamics computer models, necessary to supersede intuitive mental models, were constructed from mathematical assumptions that would incorporate the multiple feedback loops among interacting variables real systems comprise. Thus they could reflect numerous and intricate linear or nonlinear relationships. In contrast, traditional mental "models" typically considered real processes too simplistically and could hardly cope with the complexities of multiple interactions and nonlinear relationships. So, as Boughey (1976, p. 5) noted, when available statistics were entered as data into the computer model and run for an appropriate time, the results were frequently unexpected and counterintuitive.

Boughey (1976, pp. 161-165) credited the Meadows group's system dynamics World 3 model with having provided the opportunity for "the first attempt to assess the extent of technological and social adjustment to our global system that will be needed to bring it into equilibrium in the foreseeable future." The group's procedures, he said, were "extremely logical." Their method made possible an ordered sequence of modifications to various input variables of the global model.

The Meadows model first simulated the global socioeconomic system's behavior from 1900 to 1970 and then went on to project its future behavior through to 2100. This run showed the Meadows group that the present historical set of input variables would not enable the global system to reach equilibrium within the stipulated time period. It would not reach stability in any of the state variables examined. Considerably before the end of this model run there would occur catastrophic depletion of nonrenewable resources. Systems collapse would ensue. Depletion of resources leading to economic collapse would occur so swiftly that the size of the industrial base would be constricted, but the previously excessive growth of that industrial base would have already produced immense pollution. Together, increasing pollution and a declining industrial base would lead to famines, and they would increase mortality. Deaths would come to exceed births so population would begin to decline, reinforcing the system collapse.

Stubborn Reliance on the Cornucopian Faith

However, the idea of an inexhaustibly cornucopian world remains an inordinately seductive dogma. It has been embraced in the industrial era "with almost ferocious loyalty," according to a retired director of research for an oil company (Carr 1976, p. 252) who recognized the disorienting effect of the Meadows team's repudiation of such an idea. "Without a steadily growing economy," he said, "Keynesian economists...are like dogs without noses."

To devotees of the cornucopian faith, the findings of studies by Donella Meadows and her associates were simply unacceptable. These faithful have supposed the finiteness of our planet poses no insoluble problems for a burgeoning population. Technology-based economic progress is, in their ideology, inherently perpetual. Together with economists' presumed infinite substitutability of one resource for another, it ensures that growth can continue forever (Maurice and Smithson, 1984).

Pre-eminent among such "true believers" was the late Julian Simon, an economics Professor at the University of Maryland and an insistent Pollyanna. With futurologist Herman Kahn, late head of the Hudson Institute in New York, he wrote a book-length rejoinder to *The Global 2000 Report to the President* (1980). In it, Simon and Kahn (1984) categorically

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rejected the validity of *The Limits to Growth*. They took issue with *Global 2000*'s expectation that "global problems of alarming proportions" would arise from projected population increases requiring unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. As dogmatic cornucopians, they insisted continued growth would not further erode the ability of biological systems to meet human needs.

Global 2000 had extensively documented the fact that Earth's human carrying capacity could be and was being damaged by overuse. Understandably, many people accustomed to the remarkable achievements of industrialized nations find that prognosis hard to accept. Simon and Kahn scoffed at such a frightening prospect, declaring (p. 45), because of increases in knowledge, the earth's "carrying capacity" has been increasing in the decades and centuries and millennia to such an extent that the term "carrying capacity" has by now no useful meaning. They proposed that the actual (and foreseeable) trends were diametrically different from those depicted both in 1972 by the Meadows team and eight years later in *Global 2000*.

In 1971 the Meadows team saw physical limits to human use of materials and energy looming some decades in the future. But two decades later, when they looked again at the data, their computer model, and their own experience of the world, they realized that despite improved technologies, greater awareness, and stronger environmental policies, many resource and pollution flows had already outgrown carrying capacity — the limits of sustainability.

"In a way we had known it all along," they said, after admitting in their Preface to *Beyond the Limits* (1992) to being surprised. Of course they had seen with their own eyes leveled forests, erosion gullies in croplands, rivers choked with silt. They had known about the chemistry of the ozone layer, and were aware of the greenhouse effect. They already knew of global fisheries that had been overfished. Water tables, they recognized, had been drawn down, and various species had been driven to extinction. But in the past twenty years they had been reading suggestions by other authors who believed resource use and pollution flows had already grown beyond sustainability. And they found their colleagues did not question it when they eventually concluded overtly that the world had now gone beyond its limits.

Yet until they set out to update *The Limits to Growth* they had shared, more than they realized, their culture's acceptance of the myth of limitlessness, so they had not let their minds fully accept what they knew. Their continuing research brought them face to face with the fact that "the present way of doing things is unsustainable." Indefinite material growth was not going to be the solution to poverty, which would have to be addressed amid a contracting material economy. "Like everyone else," they said, "we didn't really *want* to come to these conclusions" [my emphasis]. "But the more we compiled the numbers, the more they gave us that message, loud and clear."

"[The Meadows team's] continuing research brought them face to face with the fact that 'the present way of doing things is unsustainable.'"

Ecological Precedents

Populations of many non-human species have undergone the experience of resource bankruptcy after irrupting — increasing exponentially when they escaped from previously constraining circumstances. But we humans have supposed no such fate could befall us because we are thought to be fundamentally unlike other animals. We have misconstrued our "superiority" over the rest of the animal kingdom. We have actually been experiencing a double irruption, and it confronts us with an intensified version of the plight of animal species that have overshot carrying capacity. The double irruption consists of the fact that, as I have written elsewhere (Catton 1980), *Homo sapiens* as a biological type had been increasing more or less exponentially for ten thousand years (since the onset of agriculture — basically, the start of human manipulation of ecosystems), and especially for the last four hundred years (since the Western Hemisphere became accessible for European expansion into a "New World").

In addition, our resource-consuming tools had been irrupting for the last two hundred years (since the

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Industrial Revolution, i.e., human reliance on fossil energy). It is conceivable that the resource demands of what I call *Homo colossus* might be brought back within the limits of permanent carrying capacity by shrinking ourselves to a less colossal role in the ecosystems in which we are participants. To become less colossal would mean giving up or drastically refining much of our "prosthetic" apparatus — the equipment that enlarges our per capita resource appetites and our environmental impacts. Can we divert ourselves from the prodigal style of living such apparatus has made possible?

Throughout the time of mankind on Earth, discoveries and inventions have sporadically enabled human societies to tap new forms of wealth. With new skills, increasing human numbers have repeatedly been able to exceed previously unsurpassable limits. Eventual stabilization within new limits has always resulted — when evolutionary processes restored natural balances. Today, though, we have become so numerous and so colossal that the limited size of this planet we inhabit must ultimately preclude any further repetition of such limit-boosting.

Cultural Lag

In contrast to warnings of the Meadows team, it was asserted by Simon and Kahn (1984) that we could anticipate "a progressive improvement and enrichment of the earth's natural resource base, and of mankind's lot on earth."

Those two men are both dead now, but their exaggerated optimism survives them. Anthony Browne (2001), writing in Britain's *Guardian Unlimited Observer*, ridiculed a *Time* magazine article that said "Everyone knows the planet is in bad shape" because oceans are polluted, forests devastated, species driven to extinction, etc.

To the contrary, Browne asserted, "There's a growing belief that what everyone takes for granted is wrong: Things are actually getting better." His assertion was based on a new book by a Danish statistician, Bjørn Lomborg, entitled *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, claiming the world's rivers, seas, rain, and atmosphere are all getting cleaner, forests are not declining, extinctions of species are few, and once-endangered ones are thriving.

This view is, says Browne, "part of a growing backlash against green groups," now coming as much from renegade environmentalists as from the more traditional right-wing opponents of environmentalism. Lomborg's book is scheduled for republication in September 2001 by Cambridge University Press after first coming out in Scandinavia. It is said to claim conservation efforts have been so spectacularly successful that most of the main forms of pollution have been eliminated, oceans are becoming cleaner, acid rain has not killed the forests, the ozone layer is recovering, and "Many environmental scares have simply failed to happen."

Some facts remain. Just since the Meadows team produced their warning of the consequences, per capita resource appetites and environmental impacts have continued escalating and Earth's human population has increased by another two billion.

U.S. emission of carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas contributing to global climate change, increased by forty-one million tons from 1999 to 2000 even while it was declining elsewhere. There is overwhelming evidence that our accelerating fossil fuel consumption is changing global climate (Bradley, 2001). The U.S. president who abandoned the Kyoto Protocol has been told by a panel from the National Academy of Sciences that global warming is real and worsening (Seelye, with Revkin, 2001). Many scientists oppose the administration's commitment to procrastinating about emissions reduction policies (Revkin 2001).

And the Census Bureau's estimate of the projected increment of world population during this presidential term of office — all of them hoping to use their proportionate share of climate-endangering fuels — will exceed the present population of the U.S. Everyone should read at least pp. 201-207 in *Beyond the Limits* (1992), where the Meadows team showed it is perilous to procrastinate. They ran the World3 model with certain changed inputs (stabilized population, and new technologies to reduce emissions, erosion, and resource use), and compared two twenty-year delay intervals. Putting these changes into effect in 1995 and running the model revealed that population could level off at 7.7 billion and have "a comfortable standard of living with high life expectancy and declining pollution until at least the

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year 2100." Had the changes gone into effect twenty years earlier, in 1975, the results would have been conspicuously better. Were the changes not made until 2015, though, they would lead to huge fluctuations in life expectancy and sustainability would remain unreachable!

In retrospect, says William McNeill (1980, pp. 73-74), this industrial era of the past two centuries may well be seen as "the work of spendthrift generations who mined fuels and minerals recklessly," with consequences for natural balances it may require millennia to heal. Humanity's recent proliferation and breakaway from older modes of life has caused such violent upheavals of ecological patterns, he reminds us, that no managerial bureaucracy can realistically expect to avoid large-scale crises. Indeed, our apparently probable reactions are likely to exacerbate them.

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Topics for Public Debate

Immigration, sustainability, and the precautionary principle

by John Cairns Jr.

Many people in the United States profess a respect for natural systems, sustainable use of the planet, and immigration. The ability to compartmentalize these issues so that they are not assessed concomitantly represents an incredible denial of the obvious relationships among them. The only way to maintain these issues in isolation is to forbid or repress holistic discussions of them. However, refusal to discuss problems freely and openly does not eliminate them and, in fact, exacerbates them. This discussion is a preliminary exploration of some factors that require a free and open exchange of ideas on natural systems, sustainable use of the planet, and immigration.

We are human
not so much because of our appearance,
but because of what we do,
the way we do it, and, more
importantly, because of what we
elect to do or not to do.
— Rene Dubos, 1981

Introduction

Even at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a free and open exchange of ideas on the issues of immigration, population stabilization, and planetary carrying capacity for humans is not forthcoming. Carrying capacity is the concept that people seem to fear most in any discussion of population issues. However, Abernethy (2001) has published a current analysis of Earth's carrying capacity for humans. Four factors are significant in any discussion of immigration, population stabilization, and sustainable use of the planet: (1) a finite planet holds only a certain number of individuals; (2) some individuals will acquire more resources than others; (3) individuals having fewer resources than others will migrate, to the best of their ability, to the areas perceived to have more resources, and (4) intelligence is of little use if used primarily to satisfy perceived short-term "needs" in ways that are deleterious to long-term use.

The Ecological Perspective

From an ecological perspective, immigration might be viewed more accurately as migration (i.e., wholesale movements of populations) from one ecoregion to another. Significant migrations may occur because a particular ecoregion has become inhospitable due to famine, war, or other causes or because significant numbers of the population believe that more abundant resources are available in other locations. These migrations may even be encouraged because the immigrants could provide cheap labor and/or because the present occupants of the area perceive their location as virtually unlimited in carrying capacity. Mass movements within a political boundary are as ecologically important to occupants outside the area as to those within the area. The Irish potato famine is a classic example of migration as a quest for better living conditions. However, creating peace and economic and biological resilience in each ecoregion will help limit migrations from one ecoregion to another.

In general, migrations for ecological reasons result from: (a) an open niche in another area, (b) seasonal or cyclic patterns, and (c) impoverishment in the home range. From the perspective of global sustainable use of the planet, mass migrations of any kind are likely to result in temporary or, worse yet,

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permanent ecological disequilibrium. Most humans are accustomed to thinking in terms of political boundaries and economic growth, rather than ecosystem health and integrity, and will almost certainly not shift this perspective until one or more ecological catastrophes compel them to do so. However, when the consequences of ecological recklessness become more apparent, time for remedial action may be short!

Although Zlotnik (1998) remarks that migration flows are relatively small on a global scale, the effects on population can be enormous. In the United States, about half the current annual population growth of 1.6 million is from natural increase and half is from immigration. By the year 2020, almost all net population growth in the United States will be from post-2000 immigrants and their descendants (Poster Project for a Sustainable U.S. Environment, undated, www.NumbersUSA.com). Without further immigration, the population of the United States (281 million in 2000) would peak at approximately 290 million by 2025. With immigration continuing at current rates, it will grow to 335 million by 2025 (Bouvier and Grant, 1995; Population Reference Bureau, 1999).

"This view indicates that the impetus for rapid expansion of humans over the entire planet was due to their inability, even in those early days, to live sustainably where they were."

Recent evidence indicates that humans spread over the planet more rapidly than was previously thought. One speculation for the rapid expansion, primarily along coastal areas, is that humans, even in earlier eras, rapidly depleted the resources suitable for their use and for which they could be competitive. This view indicates that the impetus for rapid expansion of humans over the entire planet was due to their inability, even in those early days, to live sustainably where they were. In other words, emigration was due to a depletion of resources, and immigration was due to either the knowledge or perception that resources were more abundant and more easily obtainable in other areas. If this speculation is accurate, it refutes the widespread feeling that ancient tribal cultures lived sustainably and in a harmonious relationship with natural systems. However, some cultures, such as the Australian aboriginals, apparently were able to live sustainably with natural systems for as much as 60,000 years.

The Source Sink Model

Pulliam (1988) has developed an ecological source sink model for a species of bird at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina in the United States. In this model, some habitats become sources from which surplus populations migrate to less suitable habitats that act as sinks for the surplus populations. In Pulliam's model sources can become sinks and sinks can become sources if the area is large and if a sufficiently large temporal span is studied. To a certain degree, some countries (e.g., Italy) with a human reproductive rate below the replacement rate are serving as sinks for countries (especially those nearby) with expanding populations and increasingly scarce resources. Clearly, sources are producing more humans than the sinks can absorb; hence the global increase in human population. If Pulliam's model is applied to humans, then individuals unable to find suitable habitat will perish, or at least will not reproduce. Consequently, in a sense, nature is pruning the surplus growth (as Tertullian would have stated it). As Diamond (1994) and others have shown, the carrying capacity of a particular area, such as Easter Island, can diminish significantly if the ecological life support system is seriously degraded. In the absence of some form of population control and protection of the ecological life support system, the human population is likely to turn resources into sinks through salinization of arable land, depletion of groundwater aquifers, global warming, and a variety of other destabilizing events.

Immigration is not likely to be a satisfactory solution to the problems of overpopulation and resource allocation, however lenient the United States and other countries might become. The planet simply cannot cope with an exponentially growing

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population, even if the doubling time is a half-century or more. Immigration at best is a way to avoid solving the planet's most pressing problems. Immigration to the United States, which has a vastly disproportionate consumption of the planet's resources, only hastens the time when the nation can no longer serve as a population sink. In this sense, the United States is already vastly overpopulated if all the immigrants and their progeny require as much per capita resources as those who are already residents.

Ecological Footprint Size

The concept of an ecological footprint (Wackernegel and Rees, 1996) provides a persuasive and reasonably simple way for measuring and visualizing the resources required to sustain households, communities, regions, and nations. The complex issues of the planet's carrying capacity for humans (e.g., Abernethy, 2001), sustainability (e.g., Hawken et al, 1999), and resource use are interrelated. The ecological footprint in hectares per person is 4.3 in Canada, 5.1 in the United States, 0.4 in India, and 1.8 for the world as a whole. The average immigrant to the United States would increase his/her individual ecological footprint size by 3.3 hectares (from 1.8 world average to 5.1 United States average).

Wackernegel and Rees (1996) note that small ecological footprints do not necessarily imply a low quality of life. Kerala, a southern state in India, has a per capita income of about $1/day (less than 1/60 of North American incomes). However, life expectancy, infant mortality, and literacy rates in Kerala are similar to those of industrialized countries, and the inhabitants have good health care and educational systems and a fairly stable population size. Wackernegel and Rees (1996) conclude that Kerala's exceptional standard of living, coupled with a small ecological footprint, is based more on accumulated social capital than on manufactured capital.

Some of the attributes that most societies profess to value, such as literacy, good health, and social capital, are not closely correlated with the size of the ecological footprint, either per capita or as a society. It is ironic, as Cairns (2000) notes, that people in the United States and many other cultures prize longevity while they continue to despoil the environment. One would think that they would be interested in sustainable use of the planet so that a longer life would not be subjected to a quality of life that has deteriorated dramatically during this period. Increasing the size of the per capita or societal footprint virtually guarantees that the quality of life will deteriorate from more polluted air, water, noise, and all the other factors associated with rapid growth on a finite planet.

If Americans were willing to decrease their per capita ecological footprint to that of Kerala's per capita footprint size, the immigration process in the United States could continue for longer than half a century. Ultimately, immigration would have to stop to avoid diminishing those attributes the United States professes to prize. Immigration is only viable on a long-term basis if the inhabitants of a country are not reproducing at replacement rates or are willing to reduce their per capita ecological footprint so as to share resources with the newcomers. Immigration is a threat if it increases the size of the per capita ecological footprint and pushes a population beyond the carrying capacity for the desired quality of life.

"Some of the attributes that most societies profess to value, such as literacy, good health, and social capital, are not closely correlated with the size of the ecological footprint, either per capita or as a society."

The Immigration Paradigm

As Kuhn (1970) noted, a paradigm is a belief so strongly held that, even when contrary evidence appears, the evidence is rejected. Paradigms bring a sense of reality to a chaotic world. However, they are not reality, merely models of it. Paradigms are extraordinarily durable and humans cling to them tenaciously. So, paradigms are not only models, but also tenaciously held beliefs.

A quotation from George Washington (Ellis,

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2001, p. 7) depicts the United States as a fount of unlimited resources that is available to enterprising individuals of whatever background:

> *The Citizens of America placed in the most enviable condition, as the sole Lords and Proprietors of a vast Tract of Continent, comprehending all the various soils and climates of the World, and abounding with all the necessaries and conveniences of life, are now by the late satisfactory pacification [Peace Treaty of Paris], acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and independence. They are, from this period, to be considered Actors on a most conspicuous Theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designed by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity.*

Unremarked here but understood and made explicit elsewhere in colonial writings (e.g., Ellis, 2001) is the idea that, even though the citizens had had access to these resources for a length of time, they had "done" nothing to them: The rivers remained unharnessed, the timber uncut, etc., so that the commercial value was not realized. A modern example is the idea that oil in Alaska is no good in the ground when Americans are paying "high" prices at the gas pump. In short, the paradigm of limited or finite resources is un-American. And if resources are viewed as infinite, why not invite the less fortunate to immigrate and share them?

A poem by Emma Lazarus entitled "The New Colossus" is engraved on a tablet within the pedestal on which the Statue of Liberty stands and is an eloquent statement of a paradigm that clearly has outlived its usefulness but that United States citizens are extremely reluctant to abandon. The poem reads in part: "Give me your tired, your poor, /Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, /The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. /Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, /I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" This nation must consider if these words are still valid today.

In addressing this statement, everyone should remember that all Americans are former immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Persuasive archeological evidence indicates that humans only recently arrived in the Americas, in geologic time. Since all humans are similar genetically, no particular group of immigrants, as a category, is superior to any other group. Altering immigration policy should be neither characterized as racist nor prejudiced in other ways. However, it is legitimate to inquire whether present immigration practices are ecologically sound — that is, are they sustainable for an indefinite period?

Leo (2001) notes for the United States immigration policies that "under the Immigration and Naturalization Act foreigners are eligible for asylum if they face the risk of persecution on the basis of 'race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.'" Leo also notes that the term *social group* "has been stretched to include disabled people, women who fear genital mutilation, and homosexuals who fear persecution. The compassion is admirable but identity politics and ideology are creeping in."

"While the criteria for entrance into the United States are continually being weakened, or made more inclusive, many citizens of the United States, including large numbers of children, lack adequate medical care and medical insurance."

While the criteria for entrance into the United States are continually being weakened, or made more inclusive, many citizens of the United States, including large numbers of children, lack adequate medical care and medical insurance. The educational system badly needs strengthening at all levels, and the infrastructure of the country, including such things as the water delivery systems for many large cities, sewage treatment plants, and the like, are badly in need of modernization. Clearly, if the nation is unwilling to provide medical care for the huge numbers of people who are already citizens and a better education for the young, the United States is not likely to be willing to share resources with

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immigrants. In short, the immigration policy seems to be a political statement with no substance or intention to treat immigrants any better or as well as some of the presently needy and homeless already present in the United States as lawful citizens.

If human society is truly interested in sustainable use of the planet and leaving a habitable planet for its descendants, there is an ultimate test of these aspirations and that is to ask, "Is the present practice sustainable for an indefinite period of time?" Present immigration practices and policies are probably not sustainable for even another century or less (e.g., Lutton and Tanton, 1994). If the United States were to continue increasing its population at the present rate and maintain per capita resource consumption at its present levels, the American society would be using an even more disproportionate share of the planet's resources than it now does.

With one billion people already receiving substandard nutrition globally and billions more only modestly better fed, it seems unlikely that these people will cheerfully relinquish already inadequate resources so that those in the United States can have still more to increase the per capita ecological footprint size of immigrants to that of the average present American citizen.

Politics aside, the United States tends to encourage immigration by those with particular technological, scientific, or engineering skills, who are ambitious for upward mobility economically, who are entrepreneurs, and, above all, who are apparently willing to risk their lives to achieve their goals. In return, the immigrants expect to enjoy the same material blessings as present American citizens.

As an aside, Charles Kennedy (personal communication) has commented on the era when the state of India was organizing itself after independence. The large estates of the nabobs and maharajahs were to be broken up into holdings for individual citizen-farmers. The question then arose, what size should these parcels be? A sociological study was carried out by sending interviewers into the villages and asking the farmers how much land they could handle. The response average was four hectares and the number explained this way: "I can live on one hectare with my family and lease out the other three as a landlord." Clearly, allocating resources will not be easy.

Sustainability in an Information Age

Bhutan became the last country in the world to have its own television station (Guha et al, 2001) when the Bhutanese government's long-standing ban on television came to an end on 2 June 1999. At present, the new station broadcasts only to the capital city of Thimphu, using English and Dzongkha, the national language. Although television can be a great educational tool, its dominant message, particularly in the United States and many other parts of the world, is materialistic. Without doubt, the degree of materialism is highly correlated with human impact on natural systems.

"...when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."

Immigration and the Precautionary Principle

The precautionary principle (Raffensperger and Tickner, 1999) states that, when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. Essentially, the precautionary principle challenges individuals and society collectively to use common sense and to act wisely and well. This rephrasing of an old rule ("An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure") shifts the burden of proof for the consequences of a particular course of action to those espousing it rather than those trying to prevent it. The quest for sustainable use of the planet involves assessing all of the multiple dimensions likely to affect the outcome in an aggregate or holistic fashion rather

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than individually, however important the individual issue might be. Further, sustainability requires studying highly complex, poorly understood systems for which the breakpoints and/or thresholds are not amenable to laboratory studies and may not be apparent until they have been crossed. Immigration policy seems a superb, though extremely challenging, test of the difficulties of implementing the precautionary principle! Certainly the precautionary principle is a *sine qua non* for sustainable use of the planet because sustainable use should be based on preventing mistakes rather than correcting them after they occur.

"...immigration cannot continue at its present level for an indefinite period without serious damage to the integrity of the ecological life support system and the quality of life of individual citizens."

Too many countries have unsustainable practices, and, without public participation in decision-making, taking preventative action in the face of uncertainty would be extremely difficult, arguably impossible. This situation is especially true when economic growth is needed while simultaneously protecting the integrity of natural systems. Some publications have explored these difficult issues (e.g., National Research Council, 1996; Natrass and Altomare, 1999; Hawken et al, 1999).

The immigration problem would be diminished if all countries had more sustainable practices, including the United States, which is a magnet for immigrants because of its disproportionate use of the world's resources. The average Mexican making thirty-five pesos (U.S. $3.60) per day is well aware of the disparity in affluence as are anti-globalization demonstrators world-wide (e.g., Carl, 2001). The central issue is, how compatible are present rates of immigration and subsequent demographic changes with political stability and sustainable use of the natural resources of the United States?

Unquestionably, the precautionary principle is one of the crucial keys to facilitating sustainable use of the planet and, concomitantly, the key to the badly needed feedback relationships between scientists and policymakers. The American Association for the Advancement of Science has taken a major step by establishing the Program in Scientific Freedom, Responsibility and Law/Court Appointed Scientific Experts, http://www.aaas.org/spp/case/advisory.htm or http://www/aaas.org/spp/case/panel.htm. It is important for scientists to maintain their objectivity and integrity while carrying out their research, but they must be increasingly aware of the policy implications of what they do and their contingent social responsibility to contribute to the protection of human health and the interdependent web of life.

My own preliminary assessment follows on some of the issues important in implementing the precautionary principle with regard to immigration policy:

1. Barring some tremendous increase in mortality in the present population of the United States, immigration cannot continue at its present level for an indefinite period without serious damage to the integrity of the ecological life support system and the quality of life of individual citizens.

2. Immigration to the United States does not appear to have helped donor countries in markedly progressing towards sustainability nor in reducing the problems that prompted individuals to leave the country. Clearly, the United States could not reasonably accept even one-fourth of the one billion or more people presently on the planet whose living conditions are dramatically substandard (i.e., living on less than U.S. $1 per day per capita.) The precautionary principle might be best implemented by helping other countries to make conditions more attractive for their inhabitants and to live more sustainably than to create problems in the United States by accepting only a tiny fraction of the world's migrating inhabitants.

3. Given the pulsating paradigm eloquently stated by the Odums (1995), one of the non-ecological pulses under human control is the rate of immigration. The

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fewer pulses policymakers must contend with, the more likely they are to achieve sustainable use of the planet. When other cultures have exceeded the carrying capacity of their territory substantially, it has not only resulted in famine, disease, and a lowering of the population, but also a lowering of the carrying capacity. The precautionary principle suggests that when environmental thresholds are uncertain and/or pulsating, it is prudent not to approach them too closely and definitely not to exceed thresholds such as carrying capacity.

4. Immigration is far less reversible than many other factors affecting sustainability. For example, the size of the country's ecological footprint can be reduced by using less polluting, more fuel-efficient automobiles or by consuming fewer resources, but it cannot, barring extreme acts of cruelty, reduce the size of the population substantially by means other than natural death, etc.

5. Immigration to the United States (or any other country) permits donor countries to prolong unsustainable practices by reducing their population size and, thus, their aggregate environmental impact.

6. Immigration frequently alters the demographics of a country and makes sustainable planning more difficult since demographics are extremely important when developing policies for sustainable use of a country or of the planet. For the planet as a whole, of course, the demographics are shifting, but reducing immigration may achieve a local balance without affecting the global balance. Both sustainable practices and policies must be developed locally and changing the demographics seriously affects both.

7. Over the long term, if present rates of immigration into the United States are continued, resource availability per capita will almost certainly diminish, thus making the country less attractive to immigrants. The transition to sustainable practices requires more efficient resource use and concomitantly reducing the size of the ecological footprint of the average citizen as well as that of the nation as a whole. It is difficult to envision the circumstances under which the present immigration rate would facilitate this process. The quest for sustainability appears to mean putting other species ahead of humans and that there is a lack of compassion for less fortunate people elsewhere on the planet — a serious ethical problem.

8. The Durants (1968, pp. 19-21) list some biological lessons of history. The first of these is that life is competition. Competition is not only the life of trade, it is the trade of life — peaceful when food abounds, violent when the mouths outrun the food. The second biological lesson of history is that life is selection. In the competition for food or mates or power, some organisms succeed and some fail. In the struggle for existence, some individuals are better equipped than others to meet the test of survival. Nature loves difference as the necessary material of selection and evolution. Inequality is not only natural and inborn, it grows with the complexity of civilization. The third biological lesson of history is that life must breed. Nature has no use for organisms, variations, or groups that cannot reproduce abundantly. She has a passion for quantity as prerequisite to the selection of quality. She is more interested in the species than in the individual, and does not care that a high birth rate has usually accompanied a culturally low civilization and a low birth rate a civilization culturally high. Thus, to the extent that encouraging immigration is a form of egalitarianism and a drive toward equality, the lessons of history are that nature will frustrate this attempt. To the degree that the quest for sustainable use of the planet is a concomitant drive toward egalitarianism and equality within the human species, it will be frustrated by nature. If, however, the quest for sustainable use of the planet is an attempt to preserve and accumulate natural capital (as espoused by Hawken et al., 1999) and protect the planet's ecological life support system and the services it

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provides to humanity, it is then not egalitarian but rather enlightened self-interest.

Reason to the Rescue

A reasoned discussion of immigration requires a high level of civility and a free and open exchange of ideas. Any environmental organization that places a taboo upon discussion of any issue affecting sustainable use of the planet has placed survival of the organization above protecting the biospheric ecological life support system and has essentially rendered itself ineffective. Employing reason is definitely not risk-free since it has cost some philosophers their lives, altered the careers of others who have attempted to employ reason when the societal norms were against it, and suffered severe sanctions when opening a discussion on a subject that was taboo in the society. It is regrettable that many colleges and universities in the United States and elsewhere are becoming increasingly unsuited to reasoned discussions with a free and open exchange of ideas because of their speech and behavior codes, zero-tolerance policies, and the like. Very possibly, the appropriate outlets for such discussions are CNN's *Crossfire*, CNBC's *Hardball*, and various other similar venues, together with some of the political forums and public policy conferences on C-SPAN, particularly the call-in programs and, of course, talk radio. Quite clearly, when the consequences of unsustainable practices become more apparent to the general public because of a recession or some other factor, more open discussions will occur. One hopes that the discussions will not be too late to be effective.

A Glimpse of the Future

The *East Sea*, a rusty freighter that was deliberately run aground in mid-February 2001 near the French Riviera (William B. Dickinson, personal communication), may be a common migration strategy in the near future. Turkish smugglers packed at least 910 Kurdish men, women, and children into the ninety-foot ship for what was clearly intended to be a one-way trip since the captain and crew fled by lifeboat with the ship facing land and the propellers turning. One day later, four hundred Africans in four boats also landed in Spain.

Not surprisingly, a book (Raspail, 1975) predicted such events, on a much larger scale, over a quarter century ago. In this fictional drama, a flotilla of one hundred rusty ships departs from the Ganges, carrying hundreds of thousands of desperately poor people who are willing to risk everything in the hope of reaching the south coast of France and a better life. Five more fleets from Africa and Asia join them, and sheer numbers threaten to overwhelm both France's resources and culture. In an afterword to a second edition, Raspail (1995) describes the vision he had that led to the book:

> *They were there! A million poor wretches armed only with their weakness and their numbers, overwhelmed by misery, encumbered with starving brown and black children, ready to disembark on our soil, the vanguard of the multitudes pressing hard against every part of the tired and overfed West. I literally saw them, saw the major problem they presented, a problem absolutely insoluble by our present moral standards. To let them in would destroy us. To reject them would destroy them. So-called Christian charity will prove itself powerless. The times will be cruel.*

"When the consequences of unsustainable practices become more apparent...because of a recession or some other factor, more open discussions will occur."

Both the quest for sustainable use of the planet and the precautionary principle would reduce the probability of this scenario becoming a reality. However, human migration, emigration, and immigration are the symptoms of a larger scale problem that is being ignored — exceeding the carrying capacity for humans of a particular ecoregion. Learning to live sustainably is the solution, and the precautionary principle is a major means of implementing sustainable use.

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Ignoring the Early Warning Signals

Accumulating scientific evidence notes that a variety of global ecosystems are approaching, or may even have exceeded, dangerous thresholds producing ecological disequilibria that may be difficult, even impossible in some cases, to reverse. For example, the Arctic icecap has already thinned by forty percent, one-fourth of the world's coral reefs are sick or dying, and natural disasters caused by environmental degradation have cost the world $608 billion over the last decade — as much as in the previous four decades combined (Brown et al., 2001).

The choice facing political leaders is unquestionably historic: Should they lead human society in a paradigm shift to rapidly build a sustainable economy or risk the loss of the natural capital, which is the ultimate basis for the global economy (Hawken et al., 1999)? Environmental and subsequently societal catastrophes are inevitable if people continue to follow the infinite exponential growth paradigm and if they are close-minded enough to ignore the increasingly persuasive environmental warning signals. Such a paradigm shift (toward sustainability) is unlikely as long as President Bush is lauded for reversing his pledge on carbon-dioxide emissions, etc. (e.g., Chilton, 2001).

Conclusions

Immigration is, of course, only one facet of a complex, multidimensional environmental problem. In the present climate of political and economic uncertainty in the United States, it seems highly probable that elected leaders will roll back environmental laws and fail to complete key international agreements. Concomitantly, impoverished peoples the world over have access to information depicting, in no uncertain terms, the enormous disparity between their level of material affluence and that in the United States. Naturally, a very high percentage of them wish to come to the United States, and of these, a significant number will be sufficiently persistent, innovative, and skillful to do so. The well-documented literature on sprawl factors in large American cities shows that there are nearly equal roles played by population growth and land use choices in the loss of farmland and natural habitat to urbanization (Kolankiewicz and Beck, 2001). Immigration is only one of the components in this complex problem but, nevertheless, an important one. It does clearly illustrate that, even if there were no immigration, human society's relationship with natural systems would have to change dramatically. Still, immigration is exacerbating the problem.

Time seems to be rapidly running out for a reasoned approach to developing human society's relationship with natural systems. Stubbornly clinging to old notions about immigration and exponential growth on a finite planet will surely result in disastrous consequences. Worse yet, the kinds of exponential growth to which society is still attached have doubling times in social change that are virtually impossible for a democratic political system to accommodate.

It seems unlikely that the immigration problem will be resolved without correcting the maldistribution in resources. The maldistribution is seen not only among individuals but among nations as well. The United States has less than five percent of the world's population (281 million out of slightly over six billion) but a much larger share of the world's wealth, despite the fact that many of the 281 million citizens are desperately poor, lack adequate medical care, and may be malnourished. Accumulating wealth and material goods does not bring happiness, but it does bring problems that, if allowed to worsen, will bring much more discontent and unhappiness. If the wealthier American citizens were to reduce their consumption and make these resources available to other individuals both in this country and abroad, immigration pressure on the United States would surely lessen and all members of human society, especially the young, might have more hope for a sustainable future. This vision is almost utopian, but the consequences of not moving quickly toward sustainable use of the planet are so horrible to contemplate that it seems prudent to make an all-out attempt to do so. ■

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The Unsustainability of Economism

Economism is not feasible economically

by John Attarian

Once upon a time, when I was a graduate student, I found some graffiti in the basement of the (now nonexistent) University of Michigan Economics Building that epitomizes the trouble with the mainstream approach to economic growth and sustainability: An astronomer, a chemical engineer, and an economist are lost at sea on a life raft with one can of food and no way to open it. They decide to pool their ideas for opening the can and adopt the best one. Astronomer: "Take our glasses apart, make a system of lenses, focus the sun's rays, and heat the can until it bursts." Chemical engineer: "Suspend the can in the sea water until the salt softens it enough so we can rip it open with our bare hands." Economist: "Assume a can opener."

Outlandish as the first two scientists' ideas are, they are grounded in reality, invoking scientific facts and employing materials actually on hand. The economist's approach, by contrast, is a respectable first step in economic model building, is rigorous, and is amenable to mathematical expression ("Let 'x' be our can opener," one can hear the economist saying) — but is divorced from reality.

Herman Daly's Dissent from Economism

Earlier, in *The Social Contract* (Vol. X, No. 2, Winter 1999-2000), I criticized the ideology of economism, the notion that human beings reduce to economic "animals" and that life reduces to consumption, by citing non-economic values and arguments. But *even in economic* terms, economism is fatally wrong, because it ignores the implications of a finite reality. Economism's touts are telling us that there are no limits, that new technology will bring sustained fabulous prosperity, propounding such extravagant futures as a twenty-five-year "long boom," whereby humanity will attain universal affluence without environmental devastation.[1] Alas for the human race, which is being dragged at economism's chariot wheels, it just isn't so.

Economites have forgotten fundamental economics: Utility maximization is subject to a budget constraint — the consumer has a finite sum of money for his wants and needs; a firm's or economy's possibilities are limited by existing technology and resources. In short, reality has limits, which constrain what humans can do. You can't get something for nothing. Ever.

One economist, Herman Daly, has made it his business to remind us of this truth by exploring the economy's relationship to the environment. Whereas mainstream economics treats the economy as independent of the environment, he points out that it is a subsystem of a finite and nongrowing ecosystem. Natural resources have finite, fixed quantities. Mainstream analysis either ignores natural resources and treats production as a function of capital (plant, equipment, etc.) and labor inputs only, or treats natural resources and capital as substitutes — if the supply of one input (resources) decreases, we can use more of the other (capital) to get the same output.

In reality, Daly observes, resources and capital are complements: the two inputs must be used together, and one is no good without the other. (In

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building a house, for example, hammers and saws are useless without woods, and if the supply of wood decreases, we can't offset this by simply adding more tools and still build the house.) From this he propounds a key insight: *If factors are complements, then the one in shortest supply will be the limiting factor"* (original italics) — i.e., the factor that determines how much output can be produced. In previous eras, he argues, when the economy was small relative to the ecosystem, capital was scarce while natural resources were abundant, so capital was the limiting factor. Since then, however, the economy has grown within the finite ecosystem, depleting many resources and reversing the inputs' roles. Now capital is abundant, and natural resources are the limiting factor. Therefore, sustained, unlimited growth is impossible.[2]

Obviously, Daly's "ecological economics" are simply reality and common sense. Unfortunately, economites, like our economist in the life raft, are oblivious to reality and common sense. They refuse to admit any limits such as scarcity, and proclaim a future of unlimited growth. They say, "Yes, Virginia, there *is* such a thing as a free lunch. Why? Because we say so, over and over and over and over again."

Unrealism and Incompetence

This new hubris first emerged in the "supply-side" school, which inspired the Reagan Administration. George Gilder, a key supply-sider, wrote in his much-celebrated *Wealth and Poverty* (1981) that "The United States must overcome the materialistic fallacy: the illusion that resources and capital are essentially things which can run out, rather than products of the human will and imagination which in freedom are inexhaustible."[3]

Since then economites have become ever more strident. The most exuberant — and celebrated — voice was the late Julian Simon. In material terms, he asserted, the human condition was improving and would do so indefinitely. Vigorously dissenting from prophets of scarcity, Simon argued in his famous *The Ultimate Resource* (1981) that our "ultimate resource is people," whose intelligence would solve our problems. Not only that, "our supplies of natural resources are not finite in any economic sense," nor is our energy supply. People would find new sources of them, or substitutes for them, or new technologies for extracting or more efficiently using them. He concluded that "There is no meaningful physical limit," not even the earth's weight, "to our capacity to keep growing forever."[4] Over time Simon's claims became fantastic. In 1994 he asserted that we then had "the technology to feed, clothe and supply energy to an ever-growing population for the next seven billion years." Even with no new knowledge, "we would be able to go on increasing forever," while improving living standards and environmental quality.[5]

"Obviously, Daly's 'ecological economics' are simply reality and common sense. Unfortunately, economites...are oblivious to reality and common sense. They refuse to admit any limits..."

Simon's method, as he admitted, was to examine historical data from extremely long periods showing, say, declining energy prices, and then simply extrapolate it into the future.[6] He would follow with sheer bluster, endlessly offering to bet that any measure of well-being one picked would show improvement; endlessly asserting, as if chanting an incantation, that "There is no reason why this downward trend [in energy prices, say] could not go on forever," that "there is no persuasive reason to believe" that trends of improvement "will not continue indefinitely," and so on.[7]

Seizing on Simon's optimism, other economites cited him routinely in their words; when he died in 1998, they eulogized him as "a beacon of cheer," "an unheralded hero."[8] Some made their own expansive claims. David Boaz asserted that as more product value springs from mental products "embedded in digital bits," "natural resources will become less relevant...human capital will become far more important to wealth creation."[9] In a speech titled

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"There Are No Limits to Growth," William O'Keefe, executive vice president of the American Petroleum Institute, scorned "the bogus finite resources argument" and concluded by anticipating "frontiers without limits."[10]

These extravagant pronouncements cannot be reconciled with realism, rationality, or even sanity. Tell a drought-stricken farmer that water is a "product of the human will and imagination." Gilder's claim is, essentially, that the mind can create external reality *ex nihilo* — that is, one can be God. Like presumption informs Simon's "seven billion years" claim. Since we are physical entities who need to consume physical resources in order to live, natural resources can *never* become "less relevant." Does Boaz think we rise from virtual beds, don virtual clothes, eat virtual food, drive virtual cars to virtual offices, and create this wealth at virtual workstations? We can do many clever things with "digital bits," but we cannot eat, drink, or wear them.

Not only the unrealism but also the sheer incompetence of argument by the unlimited growth camp is startling. Predictably, it was most vividly illustrated by Julian Simon. Dismissing concern over soil erosion as "a fraud," Simon declared that the data "suggest that the condition of cropland has been improving rather than worsening." Annual rates of soil erosion have been falling since the thirties, he observed; therefore "erosion is lessening rather than worsening" and the soil on our farms is becoming less eroded rather than more eroded."[11] Simon's glib assertions mask an incredible howler: he confused the *annual* rate of erosion with *total* erosion. What the data indicate is that *erosion is increasing,* but at a *decreasing* rate. The soil's condition indeed is worsening — just more slowly, that's all.

Kentucky farmer and agrarian Wendell Berry, who *does* know what he is talking about, has lamented soil erosion for years, pointing out that in the mid-eighties, topsoil loss outweighed the grain harvested by five times in Iowa; twenty times in eastern Washington. In 1999 Berry observed that the topsoil erosion is outrunning replacement on ninety percent of our cropland.[12] Vindicating Berry, preliminary data from the Department of Agriculture's 1997 National Resources Inventory indicate that 112 million acres of

A Selection of Web Sites on Herman Daly

Readers interested in more information on Herman Daly and his path-breaking "ecological economics" will find the following web sites useful:

• http://iee.umces.edu/miiee.html This is the web site of the University of Maryland's Institute for Ecological Economics where Daly is on faculty. Using http://iee.umces.edu/miiee/HERMANCV>html will get his University of Maryland address, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address, a selective list of his publications, etc.

• http://www.ecoethics.net/bib/1997/enca-006.htm

Lists Daly's major works, with title links to on-site bookseller information.

• http://www.newdream.org/bulletin/daly.html

The Center for a New American Dream website has a capsule biography and brief interview with Daly.

• http://www.igc.org/envreview/daly.html

Text of a conversation with Daly on sustainability.

• http://iisd.ca/didigest/special/daly.htm

Text of major *Developing Ideas* interview with Daly about conventional economics, ecological economics, trade, sustainability, etc. A good introduction to Daly's thought.

• http://www.law.ufl.edu/cgr/envirotrade_seminar/Herman.htm

Text of Daly's November 1993 *Scientific American* article, "The Perils of Free Trade."

• http://www.ap.harvard.edu/papers/T&E/Daly/Daly.html

Daly's scholarly but quite readable paper "Against Free Trade: Neoclassical and Steady-State Perspectives," prepared for 1994 conference on trade and the environment, Pacific Basin Research Center, JFK School of Government, Harvard. Includes good short discussions of the relation of economy to environment, and growth vs. development.

• http://www.jps.net/zpg/dalysimon.htm

Daly's January 1982 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* review of Julian Simon's *The Ultimate Resource* (1981).

• http://www.worldpolicy.org/Americas/environment/daly.html

Ch. 5, on growth fallacies, from Daly's book *Steady-State Economics.*

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cropland, thirty percent of the total, is excessively eroding, losing 1.3 billion tons of soil annually.[13]

Ever pontificating through his hat, Simon made a flippant, ignorant exercise in denial about soil exhaustion: "We go on year after year using the same farmland. Yet the farmland becomes ever richer, produces ever more; the state of the environment in those farms, by every measure we have, gets better and better and better. So the notion that there must be some bad things going on there — well, maybe there must be, but we never seem to be able to see them."[14]

"...Expressing productivity in value terms unfortunately obscures the truth that productivity is ultimately grounded in physical reality..."

Had Simon read his Berry he might have seen better. Berry made the important point that as soil fertility has fallen, we have compensated with heavy doses of chemical fertilizers. "These have effectively disguised the loss of natural fertility, but it is important to emphasize that they *are* a disguise. They delay some of the consequences of failure, but cannot prevent them."[15]

Limits to Productivity Growth and Resource Savings

The truth is, unlimited growth is impossible. Two bodies cannot occupy the same point at the same time; the law of gravity operates; no successful perpetual motion machine exists. These truths hint that reality does constrain us and is not infinitely malleable. There is, finally, our inescapable destiny: death. Death, indeed, is *the* unanswerable proof of creaturehood, of reality's inexorable limits on human possibilities.

Yes, human ingenuity can do many things. But we cannot manipulate reality *forever, without limit.* To see this, let us examine two phenomena that Daly does not address but that economites cite to support their optimistic claims: productivity growth and material input savings.

A lot of "new economy" optimism flows from the much-touted recent productivity boom due to new technology, especially computers.[16] Economists' practice of expressing productivity in value terms unfortunately obscures the truth that productivity is ultimately grounded in physical reality: output per man-hour of goods and services, which entails a process of work by a physical being. Work necessarily means a series of physical motions by a human or equipment or both. Productivity is really a measure of the speed of this process — that is, of how quickly these motions are being completed. Productivity *growth* means that the process is being completed more quickly per time period, i.e., that the motions involved have speeded up. *Steady* productivity growth means that they keep on accelerating. Unlimited productivity growth, taken to its ultimate conclusion, means that eventually we will produce goods and services instantaneously — which is obviously absurd.

Why? Because, as reflection on reality should make clear, there are physical limits on how quickly motions can be completed. Some runners have broken Roger Bannister's four-minute-mile record. But nobody has run a mile in a minute or less, and nobody ever will. The body just simply can't move that fast. Productivity growth of, say, 1.5 percent a year implies that output per man-hour will be twice as high in roughly forty-eight years as it is now. But is it seriously possible that in 2049 auto workers will assemble cars twice as quickly as they do now, keyboard operators perform twice as many keystrokes a minute, barbers cut twice as many heads per hour, a doctor see twice as many patients? And even if it were possible, can these doubled speeds be doubled again? And again? Obviously not. The conclusion is inescapable: eventually, productivity growth will hit a ceiling, then stagnate.

As for savings in material inputs, this turnip too holds only so much blood. True, innovations have brought radical material saving in many items; libertarian Virginia Postrel brags that the weight of a twelve-ounce can of soft drink fell by eighty percent in 1961-1996.[17] But material content can be reduced only to a point, beyond which the items will be too flimsy to function. In many cases we have already hit this limit. As any observant consumer knows, index

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cards and manila folders have become thinner and thinner, staples flimsier (often bending rather than penetrating if even a few pages are being stapled), T-shirts less substantial (and falling apart faster). The plastic ketchup bottles I bought at Sam's Club were so thin-walled they bore warning labels cautioning the consumer not to drop them, presumably because they would break apart. Arguing that material content can be reduced without limit necessarily implies that eventually items will be produced out of almost nothing — another absurdity.

So reality imposes limits after all, and when they are reached, economic growth will stagnate. The conclusion is clear: Herman Daly is right.

Reality Check: Daly Passes, Simon Flunks

If the foregoing exercises in commonsensical thinking do not convince, reality is the final court of appeal. Evidence is piling up rapidly that natural resources have indeed become the limiting factor for economic growth, vindicating Daly and discrediting Simon.

Africa's situation proves that soil exhaustion is indeed possible, with disastrous consequences. A UN-World Bank study reports that 850,000 square miles of African land is degraded and that if current trends continue, Africa will be unable to feed two-thirds of its population by 2025.[18] In February 2000 Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan told the Senate Banking Committee that since America consumes less than half its agricultural output, we depend on exports to sustain production. Hence, "the more we can open up markets abroad" the better for sustaining "a viable, very productive agriculture."[19] Greenspan did not grasp that we are in effect exporting our topsoil, and that following his counsel would necessarily accelerate its degradation. Far from sustaining a viable agriculture, export growth is a recipe for ruining it.

In their March 1998 *Scientific American* article "The End of Cheap Oil," Colin J. Campbell and Jean Laherrère point out that about half the earth's supply of conventional (i.e., readily accessible) crude oil has already been extracted and consumed, and they argue that "within the next decade, the supply of conventional oil will be unable to keep up with demand" and that production will begin falling before 2010. Intensified exploration for new oil fields is unlikely to help much. "There is only so much crude oil in the world, and the industry has found about ninety percent of it." While abundant unconventional oil reserves exist, extracting them will be financially and environmentally costly.[20]

"...about half the earth's supply of conventional (i.e., readily accessible) crude oil has already been extracted and consumed..."

Developments since then support this gloomy analysis. Campbell points out that Western estimates of Caspian Sea oil reserves have been exaggerated. So far, the Kashagan East well in the north Caspian has found about seven billion barrels of oil, leading two major companies to withdraw from the project. Worldwide oil discovery in 2000 was 11.2 billion barrels, less than half of total consumption. Potential reserves of deepwater oil are some eighty-five billion barrels — enough to supply the world for less than four years. Oil production in the lower forty-eight American states peaked in 1972 and has fallen ever since; having already used up most of its own oil, America now imports over half the oil it consumes. But several foreign sources other than the Middle East are at or approaching peak production; the North Sea oil fields are currently peaking with British production already falling. Campbell warns that America must find a way to cut its demand for oil by at least five percent annually.[21] With not only transportation and home heating but also agriculture extremely dependent on petrochemicals (for fertilizers, energy, and pesticides), the drying-up of cheap oil will have grim repercussions.

Still another limiting factor is water. Only one percent of the world's fresh water is readily available. Water depletion in Chinese and Indonesian urbanized areas is already serious: Beijing's water table has fallen sixty feet in the past decade; Jakarta's depleted aquifers are polluted with seawater. China's

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government has repeatedly cited water as the biggest constraint on China's economic growth and development, and over four hundred Chinese cities face water shortages. Chinese experts on water warn that by 2030, when China's population is projected to hit 1.6 billion, the water crisis will be serious, with per capita shares of water estimated at 1,760 cubic meters, barely above the international "alarm level" of 1,700. Per capita water availability in India is now 1,950 cubic meters, and is likely to go below 1,000 cubic meters in the next decade.[22] "The rise of Asia...simply can't be stopped," chirped "long boom" touts Peter Schwartz and Peter Leyden in *Wired* magazine in 1997, making an "informed [sic] projection" (water shortages are totally unmentioned) of "torrid economic growth in China" by 2004.[23] What planet do economites live on?

Here at home, the Colorado River disappears by the time it reaches Mexico due to excessive water removal by California, Arizona, and Colorado. The Tucson area is draining its aquifers twice as fast as they are replenished, and relies on water from the Colorado. Pumping for irrigation from the huge Ogallala aquifer, which supplies one of our most important agricultural areas, nearly quadrupled in 1949-1990, causing significant declines in the water table. Water removal from the aquifer has been exceeding replacement by some 130-160 percent; if this continues, in roughly forty years the aquifer is projected to be non-productive. Droughts and soaring Western population (thanks to immigration) have recently accelerated the drain. According to the Texas Water Development Board, in 1997 6,231,000 acre-feet of water were removed from the Ogallala while it was recharged with only 438,910 acre-feet, and some of the other aquifers supplying Texas are also experiencing drainage above replenishment.[24]

The worldwide collapse of fish stocks from over-fishing is an especially vivid confirmation of Daly's position. Once abundant, cod have all but disappeared from the Grand Banks off Canada and New England, ruining the local fishing industry. According to the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization, almost seventy percent of fish stocks worldwide are fully exploited, over exploited, or badly depleted. Of sixty commercial fish stocks in the northeast Atlantic, forty suffer from unsustainable fishing. In the North Sea, stocks of most species of commercial fish are exhausted. In desperation, the European Union banned fishing in the cod's main spawning grounds for this year's spawning season. Simon cited the substitutability of resources to argue that resources are non-finite. The fishing situation disproves him; substitution of one limited resource for another can simply exhaust both. When France's black bream fishery collapsed, for example, French fishermen switched to bass off England's west coast and depleted the bass, too, prompting the British to impose catch limits.[25]

It stands to reason that a worldview reducing human fulfillment to a matter of envy, avarice, and gluttony, to goading and gratifying insatiable appetites, is lethally wrongheaded in a limited world. Some time in the next few decades, economism will shatter against reality's limits. Indeed, the foregoing evidence suggests that in some places the collision is already happening. Wrenching adjustments are inevitable. These will entail far more modest living standards, enforce respect for the world's carrying capacity, and silence the impious vaunting babble of unlimited growth.

NOTES:

1. See, e.g., Richard D. McKenzie, *The Paradox of Progress: Can Americans Regain their Confidence in a Prosperous Future?* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. viii, 21, 229; David Boaz, *Libertarianism: A Primer* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), p. 288; David Elias, *Dow, 40,000* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999); Peter Schwartz and Peter Leyden, "The Long Boom: A History of the Future 1980-2020," *Wired*, July 1997, pp. 115-129, 168-173; Peter Schwartz and Peter Leyden, *The Long Boom* (Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1999).

2. Herman E. Daly, *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), pp. 47-50, 76-78.

3. George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. 232.

4. Julian L. Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 348, 5, 6, 38-41, 43-53, 346.

5. Norman Myers and Julian Simon, *Scarcity or Abundance? A Debate on the Environment* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), p. 65.

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6. Ibid., p. 148.

7. Ibid., pp. 11,12, 20-21, 115, 119, 132-133, 140-141, 151, 188-189, et al.

8. See, e.g., Warren Brookes, *The Economy in Mind* (New York: Universe Books, 1982), pp. 15, 29-32, 37; Virginia Postrel, *The Future and Its Enemies: The Growing Conflict Over Creativity, Enterprise, and Progress* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), pp. 33, 51, 85; William F. O'Keefe, "There Are No Limits to Growth," Vital Speeches of the Day, January 1, 2000, p. 190. Obituaries: Brian Doherty, "In Memoriam: Julian Simon," Reason, May, 1998, p. 8; Steve Forbes, "Good Man Gone," *Forbes*, March 9, 1998, p. 28; Stephen Moore, "Julian Simon, RIP," *National Review,* March 9, 1998, pp. 22, 24.

9. Boaz, *Libertarianism*, p. 285.

10. O'Keefe, "There Are No Limits to Growth," pp. 189-192.

11. Myers and Simon, *Scarcity or Abundance?*, pp. 53-54, 132.

12. Wendell Berry, *Home Economics* (New York: North Point Press, 1987), p. 130; Wendell Berry, "Failing Our Farmers," *The New York Times*, July 6, 1999, A17.

13. United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, "1997 National Resources Inventory: Highlights," printout (http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov), p. 3-4.

14. Myers and Simon, *Scarcity of Abundance?*, p. 147.

15. Berry, *The Gift of Good Land*, p. 118.

16. See e.g., Mike McNamee, "An Economy on Steroids?" *Business Week,* July 7, 1997, pp. 126-127; Schwartz and Leyden, "The Long Boom," pp. 116, 118.

17. Postrel, The Future and Its Enemies, p. 62.

18. "Depleted Soil Threatens Africa," *The Detroit News*, October 19, 1999, 9A.

19. U.S., Senate, Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, Hearing, Humphrey-Hawkins Report on U.S. Monetary Policy, February 23, 2000. printout (Congressional Information Service), p. 17.

20. Colin J. Campbell and Jean H. LaHerrère, "The End of Cheap Oil," *Scientific American*, March 1998, pp. 78-83.

21. C. J. Campbell, "Oil Price and Depletion," June 6, 2000, iNet News Service, p. 2 (http://www.oilcrisis.com/news); C. J. Campbell, "Peak Oil: A Turning Point for Mankind," *Hubbert Center Newsletter*, #2001/2-1 (April 2001), pp. 2-3.

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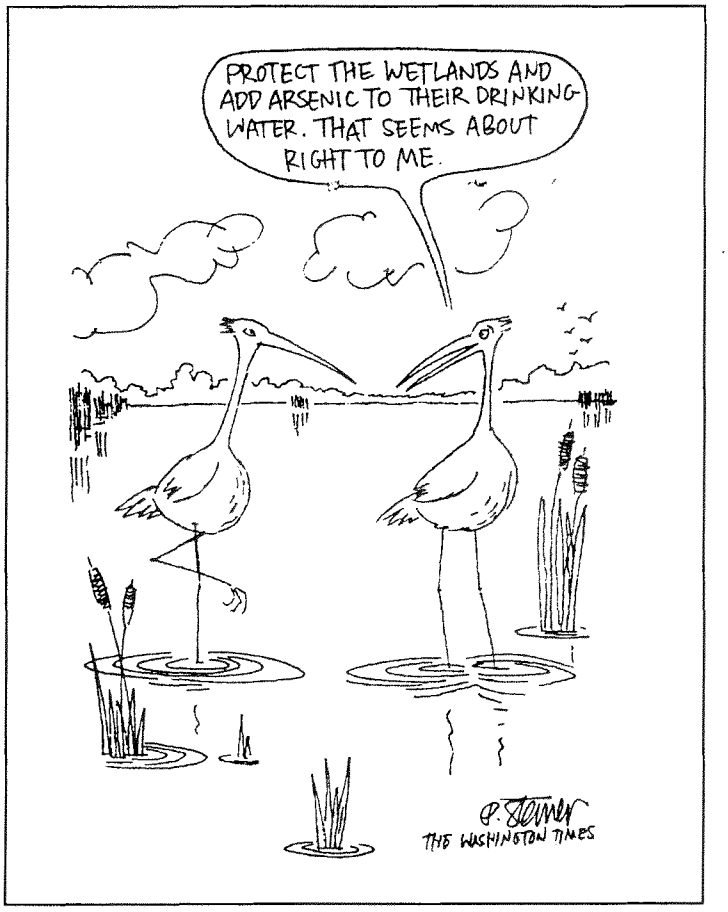
PROTECT THE WETLANDS AND ADD ARSENIC TO THEIR DRINKING WATER. THAT SEEMS ABOUT RIGHT TO ME.
P. Steiner
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

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Popular Economic Fallacies re: Immigration

by Ezra Mishan

The South-to-North movement of people that began after World War II may be attributed almost wholly to the "revolution" in communications and transport. Among the mass of poor people living in Asia, Africa, South America, and the Caribbean there dawned a growing awareness of the high material standards enjoyed by workers in the countries of the West at the same time as travel to such countries became cheaper and faster.

It us hardly surprising that the hundreds of thousands of colored immigrants that began to pour into Britain in the late 1950s should have sparked a debate about the advantages or otherwise sustained by the host country. More recently thew debate has become more heated, fueled as it is by popular economic fallacies.

Since a basic underlying fallacy can be made more easily apparent by painting with a very broad brush, we may imagine the world to be divided into just two areas: a prosperous Northland and a relatively impoverished Southland.that has about ten times the population of Northland. Although there is free movement of goods between the two areas, we suppose that, initially, there is no movement between them of labor or capital.

Operating with this simple model in which labor and capital are held to be homogeneous, we need attend only one general economic principle: the more capital per unit of labor, the greater the productivity of labor. Northland's prosperity is therefore to be explained simply by the far higher ratio of capital to labor. If all legal impediments to the movement of labor were now to be removed, labor from Southland would begin to move to Northland; and the lower the costs of movement[1] the larger the number of Southlanders wanting to move there. But the greater the augmentation of Southland labor to the indigenous labor supply in Northland, the lower becomes the equilibrium wage in Northland. In the extreme case of zero costs of movement, the South-to-North movement continues until the wage rates in the two areas are about equal. However, since the initial population of Southland is ten times that of Northland, the wage rate in Northland will have sunk far more than it has risen in Southland.

From the simplified model we may conclude only one thing: that large-scale immigration into Britain — measured in hundreds of thousands, or millions — acts to reduce the real wage in this country, or at least acts to curtail its rate of growth.

Although allegations during the 1950s and 1960s that Britain suffered from a general shortage of labor favored a policy of large-scale immigration, such a policy had to be discarded in 1962 — which is just as well since such an allegation is certainly an economic fallacy. The belief that there must be a general shortage of labor stems from the perception of a general shortage of goods. But to an economist a general shortage of goods means only one thing: that the aggregate value of goods demanded (at prevailing prices) exceeds the value of goods that can be produced with existing resources.

Whatever the cause of general shortage of goods,

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the situation is one described by economists as "too much money chasing too few goods." Thus it is an economic symptom of potential or actual inflation; one that can take place in any country irrespective of its supply of labor. It can take, and has taken, effect in countries such as India and China that have ample supplies of labor. And the traditional, indeed the only means of checking such inflation, is through a curbing of the money supply, raising interest rates, and increasing taxes.

"importing foreign labor to meet a perceived labor shortage...acts to prevent the rise in pay necessary to eliminate the initial shortage of domestic labor."

If, however, the response to incipient inflation is that of importing labor, it can only aggravate the inflation since the immigrant-caused increase in aggregate expenditure will far exceed the immigrants' production of additional goods. For even if the newcomers did not spend a penny of their earnings, living entirely on manna sent from heaven, their employment in the host country would initially require an expansion of expenditure on industrial capital that is several times the value of their annual incomes, and therefore of their annual production of goods. Moreover, allowing that immigrants do indeed spend a large proportion of their incomes, one has to reckon also with additional capital expenditures on housing and other items of social infrastructure — all of which necessarily add fuel to the inflation.

Turning to particular shortages of labor, official encouragement was given in the 1950s and 1960s to the recruitment of overseas labor in order to meet apparent shortages in nursing and rail transport. Such a policy overlooks the fact that in any economy, inconsequence of continual changes in the overall pattern of demand, there will be from time to time excess outputs of some goods or services and shortages of others; therefore an excess of labor in others. Without recourse to continual importing and exporting of labor, a market economy is able to cope with these unavoidable vicissitudes in demand simply through changes in the price of the relevant goods and services.

Thus, in the complete absence of imported labor, additional personnel would have been attracted into the nursing profession by the offer of better salaries and working conditions — possibly also by the installation of more sophisticated medical equipment. Similar remarks, of course, apply also to meeting the apparent shortage of railway workers.

It may be concluded that importing foreign labor to meet a perceived labor shortage — obviously the preferred solution of businessmen — acts to prevent the rise in pay necessary to eliminate the initial shortage of domestic labor. It should also be apparent, however, that such a rise in the pay of, say, nursing and transport personnel does not alter the aggregate real income of the economy since it involves no more than a transfer payment from one group to another: in effect a redistribution of real income in favor of workers in nursing and transport.

The occasional shortage of special skills — those of doctors, physicists, electronic engineers and so on — can also be similarly resolved with the resources available to the domestic economy. When foreign personnel are not recruited, a movement of skilled personnel into these occupations has to be attracted there by higher salaries and better conditions. To be sure, time is always involved in augmenting the number of trainees in universities and technical colleges, but the delays are hardly such as to impose genuine hardship on a mature economy.

Indeed, importing such skilled labor must produce untoward economic effects. The policy of recruiting foreign skills to meet shortages as and when they occur must inevitably shunt the British economy into the uncomfortable position of becoming, over time, dependent upon a continued flow of specialists from abroad.

Having shed some light on these old but recurring economic fallacies, let us now turn briefly to some of the more recent ones.

First, the popular belief that Britain needs "fresh blood" from abroad in order to support its "ageing

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population" is a fallacy for the obvious reason that the support of payments to pensioners by the working population is certainly not an indication of the operation of any economy. The seeming burden of pensions is a consequence wholly of the country's institutional arrangements — which realization should afford some relief. For if the aged in Britain really depended for their support on immigrants who will themselves eventually become aged, and need the support of yet more "fresh blood," the country would have to continue bringing in immigrants in ever larger numbers forever.

Of incidental interest are the remedies proposed by those who have accepted this misconception. They include a greater tax allowance for children in the hope of rejuvenating the demographic structure of Britain and — more immediate in its impact — the raising of the age of compulsory retirement to 70 or 75. Both proposals may be regarded as good in themselves by conservatives, though we cannot leave the matter there.

The crux of the fallacy derives, as indicated above, from the confusion of economic institutions with economics proper: of an acceptance, as a fact of economic life, of an arrangement whereby pensioners are paid from the current contributions of employer and employees.[2] In the complete absence of any state intervention, people would be obliged to save or invest for their old age or else to insure in companies that undertake to invest their funds so as to ensure a safe and steady return. And although the state may continue to require employer-employee contributions toward a pension fund, so long as the sums collected are invested by the state with accredited insurance agencies, the effect is the same: pensions received on retirement become wholly independent of the earnings of the workforce. No "new blood" may apply.

Secondly, there is the occasional reminder the British families, at least white families, are not quite reproducing themselves and, therefore, in the absence of immigrants our population may decline. But then a smaller population of this island would enjoy economic and environmental advantages: more space, less traffic congestion and less pollution generally. An easing of land requirements, and therefore a fall in its price, would be reflected in lower agricultural costs and lower house prices. With a population of, say, some 30 million, the country would be virtually self-sufficient in food. And with the decline in our imports, relative to our exports, the terms of trade would move in our favor, so contributing further to higher living standards.

Thirdly, we need only glance briefly at those occasional triumphal assertions of immigrant-conferred benefits that, like a desert mirage, shimmer on the horizon but dissolve after a minute's contemplation. One example surfaced recently in a recent radio debate during which it was solemnly averred that the economic contribution to Britain's GDP of the Asian community was more than £9 billion. But whatever the figure for the aggregate earnings of any ethnic group, it does not differ much from its aggregate expenditure. Whatever value it adds to GDP is therefore a measure of its own economic benefit, not that conferred on the rest of the community. Were it otherwise, Britain would accumulate unlimited economic benefits simply by unlimited immigration. For every additional ten million Chinese workers (less than 1 percent of the Chinese population), we should anticipate an increment of GDP equal to about 300 billion.[3]

Related to the above bogus benefits of immigration is the proud catalogue of outstanding achievements in business, science, music, letters and the arts flaunted by one or another ethnic group. But while such ethnic pride is very human and understandable, the fact is that such successful careers are of no great economic consequence. A random sample of, say, half a million British families — or, given time enough to settle in, half a million of any reasonably industrious and assimilable ethnic group — is pretty sure to contain comparable proportions of distinguished individuals.

From this unremarkable observation no benefits from increased immigration can be salvaged, at least, not in a world where the ranking of countries by population has no affinity whatever with their ranking by economic development or economic innovation.

Another fallacy is that hard-working immigrants confer a benefit on this country inasmuch as they "pay more in taxes than they consume in public services." For the proportion of immigrant workers (especially if

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they are young and unmarried) who are legally and continuously employed, it is probably true that most of them are likely to pay more in taxes than the value of the public services they receive — at least during their working lives here. But this is equally true of British workers: during their working lives they are also apt to be paying more in taxes than they receive in public services.

The children of such immigrant workers however are in much the same position as the children of British workers. According to the number of years in active employment, the number of their children, their average tax bracket, etc., they will be either a net recipient of, or a net contributor to, the value of the public services provided by the country over their lifetimes.

In short, one may conclude only that — provided one ignores all other relevant economic considerations — there might well be some economic benefit in the form of a tax gain from employing those hard-working immigrants who agree both to remain childless while in Britain and to be repatriated at the end of their working lives.

In addition to economic fallacies and misconceptions, there will always be a number of blatant assertions with which one cannot take issue since they are not really economic propositions: just spin and froth. We have therefore to resign ourselves to much windy rhetoric that will continue to circulate in the media. Fatuous claims today about the immeasurable benefits to be reaped by the "entrepreneurial skills" of immigrants are, incidentally, reminiscent of the equally fatuous claims of the 1960s about the incalculable benefits to Britain that would accrue from association with the "economic dynamism" of the Six, once in the EEC.

Finally, support for the admission of genuine asylum seekers on grounds of compassion or tradition fails to reckon with the scores of millions of families in South America, Africa and in Asia, to say nothing of those in eastern Europe or the Middle East, who can legitimately claim to live in fear of arrest intimidation, torture or death, or more generally, are harassed or persecuted either by state police or by some vindictive ethnic group.

Honesty requires us to acknowledge the unenviable plight of scores of millions of people so victimized in their homelands; for that matter, to acknowledge also the many hundreds of millions whose living standards in comparison with ours are pitiful. Were I born one of these unfortunates, I would certainly make strenuous efforts to escape to the more prosperous and secure countries of the West.

Yet we have to accept the regrettable fact that we are all born into an inherently unfair universe. Conservatives at least are aware that resolute endeavors to eradicate social injustice in a world where so much of it exists, and in so many forms, prove eventually to be not only ineffectual: such endeavors will almost certainly wreck or erode those social habits, conventions, traditions and institutions that contribute to the maintenance of fragile forms of democratic civilization in some parts of the world.

The prevention of a rising tide of illegal immigrants from gradually swamping the precarious civilizations of the West will soon become the most urgent of political priorities. With the gathering momentum of the South to North movement — further energized by increasingly profitable and powerful criminal organizations — the British people can no longer afford to think of immigration in terms of bygone traditions. We should be thinking more realistically of our prospects for survival as a nation in an already tight little island set in a world of expanding population and mobility, and if not as a nation, at least as a haven of relative civility and security in a "global village" become increasingly grasping, frenzied and savage. ■

NOTES

1. The costs of movement comprehends not only travel costs but also any distress or unease at parting, and the difficulties attendant upon resettlement in the host country, less the welfare provisions available here.

2. The contribution of the employers, however, does not come out of their incomes. Such contributions to the pension funds are regarded by management as an overhead and, over a long period, enter into the prices of the goods being produced. In effect they are being financed by the consumer.

3. Since any immigrant who finds work here may be euphemistically described as a "wealth creator," the Home Office Minister, Barbara Roche, who declared that Britain needs to attract more "wealth creators" to compensate for its ageing population, skillfully merged two fallacies into a single sentence.

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South Korea Army Fights Drought

Worst dry spell in ninety years threatens rice farmers

by Jae-Suk Yoo

South Korean soldiers put down their guns and picked up buckets and water hoses to fight a new enemy: drought.

Facing its worst dry spell in ninety years — and a threat to its staple food, rice — South Korea mobilized a fifth of its total military force to farms. The 130,000 troops were dispatched to ninety hard-hit regions armed with drilling machines, trucks, excavators, and pumping motors to dig wells or draw water from reservoirs.

"It's like pouring water into a bottomless pot," said Warrant Officer Oh Kwang-Jei, supervising sixty soldiers watering a parched rice paddy. "But we will make this land wet again, and fit to raise rice."

For two days, Oh's 9th Infantry Division soldiers, who usually guard part of the tense border with communist North Korea, used trucks to carry 62,400 gallons of water from a reservoir to rice paddies near Koyang, sixteen miles north of Seoul.

"We are here to serve the country," said Cpl. Chung Jee-myong. "I think this work is as meaningful as defending the nation with guns."

In Koyang and other drought-hit areas in the northern part of South Korea, fire engines, military, and construction trucks rolled along dusty paths to fetch water. Soldiers in green T-shirts and camouflage pants used plastic buckets to water paddies that were parched and cracked.

"I can't say how happy I am. They came here to save my life," said Lee Kisun, a 70-year-old farmer.

South Korea maintains a 650,000-member military to guard against North Korea, with which it is technically still at war after the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce. All eligible South Korean men must serve twenty-six months in the military.

Since March, South Korea has had a nationwide average of only 3.7 inches of rain — less than one-third of the usual rainfall of 11.4 inches for that period.

> Since March (2001), South Korea has had a nationwide average of only 3.7 inches of rain, less than one-third of the usual rainfall of 11.4 inches for that period. Many farmers face financial ruin.

The drought, which is expected to last another week, hit during the crucial rice-transplanting season that began in May and usually ends in June. A rice paddy must be submerged under at least an inch of water to support young rice.

North Korea, too, is suffering from a protracted dry spell that has decimated the fall harvest.

Nearly ninety percent of the potato, wheat, barley, and maize seed sown in North Korea earlier this year have dried up, the Agriculture Ministry said, according to KCNA, the North's foreign news outlet.

Ravaged by floods, drought, and mismanagement, the impoverished North has just two-thirds of the food it needs to get through the year, the UN World Food Program said in April.

Earlier Tuesday, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung issued a nationally-televised statement urging the public to join the fight against drought. Kim also promised tax cuts and low-interest loans for drought-hit farmers. ■

***Jae-Suk Yoo** prepared this report from Koyang, South Korea, for the Associated Press. This reprint is from* The Detroit News *of June 13, 2001, page 8-A.*

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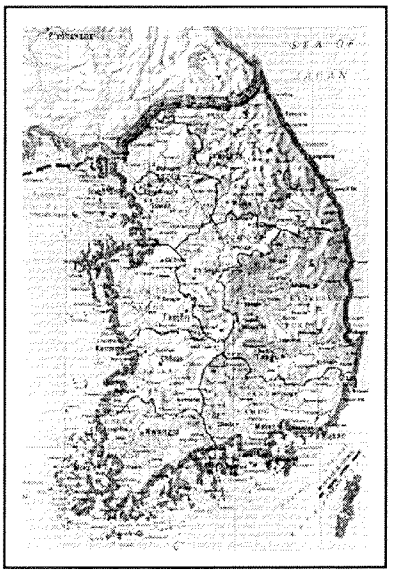
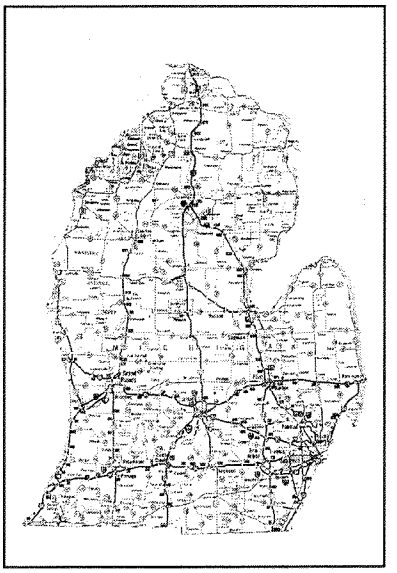
The Carrying Capacity of South Korea

by John H. Tanton



Map 1 — South Korea

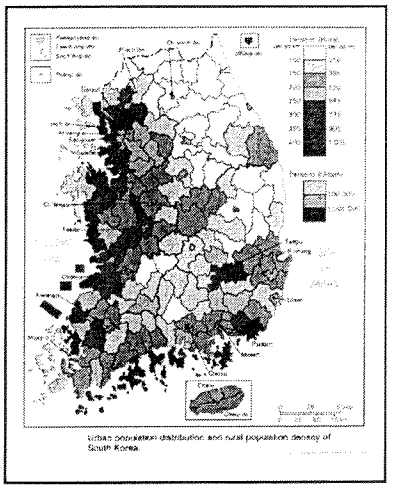


Map 2 — Lower Michigan

The drought in South Korea as reported in the Detroit News article on the previous page can serve to remind us of the concept of "carrying capacity" which can be defined as the maximum population that can be provided for in the *worst* of times. If any country grows in numbers to the carrying capacity that can be supported in only the best of times, then hardship will follow during the natural downturns that are part of all cyclical phenomena. This includes the weather. As the foregoing article notes, it was this dry 90 years ago — just yesterday in the memory of such an ancient country.

This calls to mind the story of Joseph in Egypt and his leadership during "the seven good years followed by seven lean years." The people survived that latter period only because they had laid up a surplus during the former. We seldom do this today since the time-value of money locked up in reserves is too great for modern financial tastes.

South Korea has a surface area of 38,000 square miles, which is only slightly smaller than Michigan's Lower Peninsula at 42,000 square miles (see maps 1 and 2). However much of Korea's land is mountainous, with peaks up to 6,000 feet. The population, which has increased from 20 million in 1950 to 47 million today, is naturally concentrated in the lowlands (see map 3). Michigan has about 9.5 million residents in its similarly-sized Lower Peninsula, so South Korea has about *five* times as many people on a comparable land mass that, owing to the mountains, is much less suitable for human support. The country is populated to a density that few Americans would relish, but one we are headed toward thanks to current immigration policies. These policies are projected to add twelve new Michigans to the U.S. population in the lifetimes of our children. Where will all these additional people live? Where will they get their water, food, and energy?



Map 3 — Population Density

South Korea is jam-packed by our standards and, as the drought is showing, is way over its carrying capacity. It is a badly overpopulated nation. One can understand why so many of its native sons and daughters want to leave.

It is past time to wake up to the fundamental matters since Mother Nature is unforgiving to those who violate her laws — among which "carrying capacity" ranks high.

Ask Joseph and his brothers. ■

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America Bursting at the Seams

U.S. population expected to exceed one billion

by B. Meredith Burke

There are clubs whose memberships ought not to grow. That of countries with one billion or more population is certainly among them. Even China and India are two too many.

Yet the just-released year 2000 U.S. Census total shows us racing pell-mell to this dubious goal. At 281 million, we have gained nearly 33 million since 1990 — and 81 million since 1970, year of the first Earth Day. Pennsylvania, one of the slowest-growth states, nonetheless gained 400,000 people. This betokens a continued upward trend.

A year ago, the Census Bureau released a new set of population projections to the year 2100. With roughly unchanging immigration and fertility policies, the bureau projected a year 2100 population of 571 million. More generous immigration policies and higher fertility will deliver us to 1.2 billion.

Most disconcerting is that we have exceeded even the highest projections of a year 2000 level of 275 million.

The world should be dismayed at the census results. Barely eighteen months ago at the July 1999 U.N. conference on population, 179 nations — including the United States — agreed on a plan to curb world population growth. Leaders of sixty-nine nations (including China but excluding the United States) signed a statement recognizing "the worldwide necessity to achieve population stabilization and for each country to adopt the necessary policies and programs to do so, consistent with its own culture and aspirations."

"With roughly unchanging immigration and fertility policies, the [U.S. Census] Bureau projected a year 2100 population of 571 million."

What global problems are made easier to resolve by more Americans? Already, with only five percent of the world population, we contribute twenty-five percent of carbon dioxide emissions, aggravating global warming. University of British Columbia urban planner William Rees and Mathis Wackernagel of Redefining Progress, a think tank on sustainability, describe an "ecological footprint" that measures human impact on nature. It is the land equivalent required to regenerate the renewable resources each person consumes and recycle the waste products produced. Conservatively calculated, the U.S. footprint (the world's largest) is 24 acres per person, the United Kingdom's and Germany's are 11, and China's is 4. The world average is 5.

Humankind as a whole consumes two-and-a-half times what the world produces; hence the loss of habitat and species. We Americans are a net importer of resources, indicated by an ecological deficit of ten acres per person. The Americans added just since 1990 represent an increased ecological load of 825 million

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acres; those since 1970 have consumed nearly 2 billion acres.

How far we have diverged from the population stabilization path urged on Congress in 1972 by the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future! The commission concluded it could identify no benefit to adding to our then-200 million. Neither our environment nor the quality of life cherished by Americans would survive a significant population increase.

To judge from the behavior of our elected officials, our culture and aspirations continue to reflect a "bigger is better" boosterism. Yet a cursory glance at a week's news reveals how population increase has triggered or exacerbated our problems. Consider its impact on spiraling housing prices, endless sprawl, traffic congestion, and looming water and power shortages as we drain our aquifers dry and become more vulnerable to hydroelectric power shortfalls in years of low rainfall. Consider the difference had Congress put us on the path to stabilization about thirty years ago.

Americans are demographically unschooled. Few comprehend how quickly numbers mount and how long it takes to slow population growth once a country resolves to do so.

Just as the Congressional Budget Office calculates the monetary effects of proposed legislation, a parallel office should calculate the demographic costs of proposed legislation. This would force our legislators to link individual legislation with long-term consequences. A "Population Impact Statement" could chart a demographic "thermometer" showing movement from the estimated sustainable ceiling of 150 million.

We are now less than two doubling times from the billion-plus club. How many others are as scared as I am? ■

Migration Flows Are the Central Issue of our Time

Constant stream prevents assimilation

by Samuel Huntington

So far, the West has done reasonably well containing terrorist threats. A year ago Osama bin Laden had a very elaborate plan to cause trouble in various places across the planet, but he was mainly stopped. The high level of vigilance in the West against this threat seems to have paid off.

For now, the main threat still seems to come from political Islamists. But terrorism is the weapon of the weak, so undoubtedly other groups will emerge in the future.

Communications and travel links strengthened by the globalization process make it easier for transnational networks, from terrorist to mafias, to operate. Globalization spreads disorder through the same kind of links that enable the expansion of legitimate commerce and other legal activities. And a good part of the world today is covered by zones of disorder, from Colombia to the Caucasus.

Migration is the central issue of our time. In the developed world there is an aging and, soon, shrinking population. In the larger part of the rest of the world a population expansion continues, generating a mainly youthful population that is the source of

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migration, instability and terrorism.

Europe and Japan will face the greatest challenges in coming to grips with this reality. The fertility rate in much of Europe is headed down to 1.2; in Japan it is about 1.3. Facing aging and declining populations, these countries will not be able to sustain themselves economically without opening up to larger and larger numbers of immigrants something they are not accustomed to. This is particularly true of Japan. For them to open up their doors to immigrants will require a social revolution.

European countries have had a bit more experience, but the pressures have already set off xenophobic reactions. Their dilemma is that if they want to maintain the cultural integrity of their countries, they must limit or stop immigration; but they can't, because of the economic necessity. If they admit migrants without assimilating them into the culture, then they will be faced with huge pockets, as in Frankfurt or Berlin, of disconnected and disaffected foreigners.

These countries have little experience assimilating people from a very different culture. Moreover, many immigrants now don't want to be assimilated. With advances in travel and communications, one can remain a Turk while living in Germany.

"If [European countries] admit migrants without assimilating them into the culture, then they will be faced with huge pockets, as in Frankfurt or Berlin, of disconnected and disaffected foreigners."

America is facing the same challenge as the rest. The factors that made assimilation work in the past waves of immigration in the mid-19th century and just before World War I are no longer present.

Then, both waves of immigration ended, aiding assimilation as no more of the same kind of people came. Immigrants came from very diverse sources, from Italy to Ireland to Poland to Greece to China. When the immigrants arrived in the United States they dispersed across the country.

The current wave of immigration to the United States is an endless stream, much of it illegal. It is overwhelmingly Hispanic, and within that primarily Mexican. And it is concentrated in the Southwest, Texas and California.

In the first waves of immigration there were two categories: the "converts," who wanted to be assimilated and went over completely to the American way of life, leaving their language and native habits behind, and the "sojourners," who worked in America for, say, 15 years and went back home to Sicily and lived well.

Now immigrants are neither converts nor sojourners. They go back and forth between California and Mexico, maintaining dual identities and encouraging family members to join them. Mexican presidential candidates now campaign for votes and money in Los Angeles.

So the United States has to face a whole complex of issues here, just like Europe and Japan. It cannot assume that because it was successful at assimilation in the past it will be in the future. ■

Taking Responsibility for Western Values

"The principal responsibility of Western leaders is not to attempt to reshape other civilizations in the image of the West, which is beyond their declining power, but to preserve, protect and renew the unique qualities of Western civilization."

— Samuel P. Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*
Simon & Schuster

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Too Many People, Too Little Power

by Ric Oberlink

There are two components to California's energy crisis — the high price of energy and an insufficient supply of energy. The former has been dominating the recent news, but it is the latter that led to brownouts last summer and threats of more to come. Moreover, inadequate supplies are a cause of higher prices.

You may have read that California's power shortage is due to the increased demand of its booming economy and what one news article called "Silicon Valley's voracious appetite for electrical power." That is wrong. You may believe that Californians — with all their new computers, big-screen televisions, and gourmet appliances — are using more electricity. That, too, is wrong.

Per capita consumption of electricity in California has been flat for twenty-five years. In 1979, per capita consumption of electricity in the state was 7,292 kilowatt-hours. In 1999, it was down to 6,9952 kilowatt-hours. Twenty years of more gadgets, new toys, and bigger appliances yielded a five percent decrease in the per capita consumption of electricity.

So California should be in Fat City regarding energy supplies. We shouldn't need any new power plants. We should be able to shut down the dirtiest of the old plants because we're using less electricity. However, during that same twenty years the population of the state grew from twenty-three million to thirty-three million — a forty-three percent increase.

California doesn't have a power shortage. It has a population "longage." The power "shortages" — like traffic congestion, like sprawl, like the depletion of habitat for wildlife, like virtually every environmental problem in California — are due primarily to population growth.

Last year California grew by 571,000 people and now has a population in excess of thirty-four million. Its annual growth rate of 1.7 percent exceeds that of Bangladesh. We think of Europe as the crowded Old World and think of America, especially its West, as the land of wide-open spaces. Yet the population density of California already exceeds that of Europe and in thirty years it will exceed that of present-day China. Clearly, it's time to say "enough is enough."

"According to the Census Bureau, two-thirds of future population growth will come from immigration. The proportion for California is higher still. California's immigrant population is almost nine million."

Many people mistakenly think California's population has grown because people move here from other states. In fact, during the last decade more people moved from California to other states than migrated from other states to California.

Most of the population growth in the United States is due to immigration. The baby boom of the '50s and '60s has been supplanted by the "immigration boom" of the '80s and '90s that

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Ric Oberlink is an environmental consultant for Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS). This op-ed, to which he has provided an addendum for The Social Contract, *appeared in the* San Diego Union-Tribune *on 17 January 2001.*

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continues today. According to the Census Bureau, two-thirds of future population growth will come from immigration. The proportion for California is higher still. California's immigrant population is almost nine million — a number exceeding the combined population of Norway and Costa Rica.

Previously we worried about energy shortfalls only in summer when air conditioners were humming. Now we have experienced Stage Three power alerts — the highest level of energy emergency — in December and January. Yet politicians and media personnel have failed to identify the cause. People are not using more electricity — there simply are more people.

After brownouts last July, Pacific Gas and Electric proposed placing a floating power plant on San Francisco Bay. Environmentalists threatened to board and disrupt the floating power plant should it sail through the Golden Gate. The idea was scrapped.

Given the obvious connection between population growth and the demand for new power plants, you might think that environmental groups would emphasize stopping the state's population growth. They don't. Oppose new power plant construction? Sure. Oppose the population growth that causes it? Too controversial.

Fortunately, not all environmentalists are so timid. The late David Brower resigned last year as a director of the Sierra Club, in large part because of its failure to take a responsible position on population growth and immigration. "Overpopulation is perhaps the biggest problem facing us, and immigration is part of that problem," Brower said. "It has to be addressed."

In his State of the State address, Governor Gray Davis offered bold rhetoric, but nothing of substance, to address California's energy problems — long-term or short-term. He certainly didn't mention population growth in California. Let us hope that other leaders have more courage.

* * *

[Author's addendum]

Since this piece was published, energy consumption figures for the year 2000 have been released — the year in which California began to experience electricity blackouts. The amount of power used per person in 2000 was 7368 kwh, one percent higher than the 1979 figure noted above. In the intervening years per capita consumption was a bit less.

It remains true, as stated above, that "per capita consumption of electricity has been flat for twenty-five years" and that the state's total electricity usage has increased with the increase in population.

Those per capita consumption figures include electricity from all sectors — residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural. Residential usage consumes about thirty percent of the total. Lest the reader think that Californians are using all the electricity to run their hot tubs and gourmet appliances, note that California is forty-ninth in per capita usage of electricity and forty-seventh in per capita energy consumption among the states.

Investigations are currently underway as to whether power producers manipulated their production to cause shortages and increase the price and, if so, whether such activity was illegal. Whatever the outcome of those investigations, one should remember the price of a commodity cannot be manipulated if there is an abundance of the commodity. Prices can be manipulated only when demand exceeds supply. ■

Electricity Consumption in California

Year	Gross Consumption (Gkh)	Population (000s)	Per Capita Use KWh
1969	111,468	19,711	5,655
1979	169,590	23,257	7,292
1989	204,139	29,218	6,987
1999	230,414	33,145	6,952

Source: 1960-1997 EIA State Energy Dat Report
1998, 1999 Electricity Consumption: EIA For, 826 estimates
1998, 1999 population: U.S. Bureau of Census

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Electricity Supply Crisis

Colorado need not repeat California's problems

by Albert A. Bartlett

It was simply outrageous to read that the U.S. Secretary of Energy had come to Colorado (December 2000) to ask western states to sell electric energy to California to help bail out Californians from a big utility problem that appears to have been created by California's officials.

What seems to have happened in California follows this pathway:

1) The population of California has been growing rapidly for decades.

2) Population growth causes growth in the demand for electricity.

3) It is apparent that the utility companies in California have failed to construct new electrical generating capacity sufficient to keep up with the growth in demand.

4) If these statements are correct, it can't come as a surprise to learn that there is an electrical energy crisis in California.

5) The surprise is that Californians are surprised by the shortage of electricity.

Why Didn't they Build Sufficient Electrical Supply?

In answering the question of why the California electrical utilities apparently have not been constructing generating capacity to keep up with projected and observed demand, certainly the high cost of purchasing new electric generators is a factor. Let's look at some ballpark figures.

The purchase price of electric generators is something like $1 per watt. Coal plants may cost more, nuclear plants will cost a lot more, while natural gas turbines cost perhaps half of this. Let's use $1 per watt as the basis for some very simple calculations. As a rule of thumb, utilities need about 1000 watts of capacity for one person. This means that for every person who moves into the service area of an electrical utility, the utility must spend about $1,000 in capital costs for the purchase of new electric generators. (This does not include fuel and other operating costs, nor does it include the costs of expanding the electrical distribution system that conveys electricity to the consumer. This is simply the cost of purchasing and installing the hardware that generates the electricity.)

Add a million people to the population of the service area of a utility, and the utility must find $1 billion to spend purchasing a billion watts (one gigawatt) of new electric generators. *The only place this $1 billion can come from is the customers in that service area.*

Costs of Generating Facilities vs Rates of Population Growth

Expressed in terms of *growth rates*, one can say that if the population of the service area of an electric utility grows by one percent in a period of time, then in that period of time, every person in the service area must pay one persent of $1,000, or $10. This is the person's share of the cost of the electrical generating equipment that must be purchased in order to supply the electricity needs of the population growth that took place in that period of time. That's roughly $10 for every man, woman, and child in the service area! If the population of California is growing two percent per year, then every man, woman, and child in California has to pay approximately $20 a year to fund the purchase of new electric generating plants. (Note: financing costs are not included in this estimate. If bonds are issued to pay the costs, the total costs, including interest on the bonds, may double the total cost cited here.)

These numbers suggest one reason why, over recent decades, the electric utilities in California appear to have been reluctant to invest in the purchase of new electrical generating capacity. They did not

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want to sock their customers with these high costs. Perhaps they were not allowed to charge these costs to the customers.

There are certainly other reasons for this reluctance, having to do with regulation, pollution, etc.

The population of the United States is growing approximately one percent per year. Thus, to purchase the needed electrical generating equipment, each person in the U.S. must pay approximately $10 a year!

THE CONSERVATIVE CAPACITY CUSHION

A few decades ago the conservative management of electric utilities called for a utility to have about twenty percent more generating capacity than the expected peak load. This conservative management would allow a utility to have one of its generators out of service because of accident, or for maintenance, without there being any loss of service to the customers.

It appears that the electric utilities in California have abandoned this conservative management criterion and have let demand grow until the margin between peak demand and maximum supply is razor thin. The utilities have counted on being able to purchase needed power from neighboring utilities whenever they wished. Now it turns out that, with de-regulation, it costs an arm and a leg to purchase outside power, and the outside power may not be available when it is needed.

The Role of the Public Utilities Commission

Question: What has the California Public Utilities Commission been doing all these years when the California electric utilities have allowed their spare electric generating capacity (the excess of maximum supply over peak demand) to decline to close to zero?

I know nothing of the laws governing the Public Utilities Commissions (PUC), but it would seem logical to expect that one of the responsibilities of a PUC would be to monitor and report on this aspect of the performance (the available capacity cushion) of the utilities for which the PUC is responsible. It would further be expected that if a PUC learned that one of its utilities was not keeping maximum supply comfortably ahead of peak demand, and was not planning to develop sufficient supply to keep ahead of projected peak demand for the future, then that PUC should have the responsibility for reporting the facts to the state Executive and Legislative branches and to the public. If the reported situation continued to deteriorate, it would be expected that there would be strong executive and legislative remedies.

Without knowing events in detail, one is led to conclude that quite possibly the California PUC has been derelict in its duty.

In the present crisis, it is reasonable for other states to be asked to help California in California's electric energy crisis, but only if the Executive and Legislative branches in California have taken strong steps to correct the actions or lack of actions of the California officials.

And where was the U.S. Department of Energy? In any reasonable world the DOE would be monitoring the supply and demand developments throughout the country and would be in the forefront of calling for corrective actions whenever projections showed that demand was growing more rapidly than supply. As far as one can tell, the California crisis seems to have caught the DOE by surprise.

Outlook for Bringing Supply Up to Meeting Demand

The California shortage of electrical energy will not be "solved" until there is, within California, or within the control of the California PUC, electric generating capacity of about greater than the expected peak demand in California. This will undoubtedly require the construction of several gigawatts of electric generating capacity at a cost of several billion dollars. (A gigawatt of electric generating capacity will cost about a billion dollars and will serve about a million people.)

With zero population growth, the planning, financing, and construction of the needed electical generating capacity could easily take five to ten years. If California's population growth continues, this will significantly increase the time needed to relieve the problem.

So once you get into a California-style electrical energy shortage, there is no quick fix.

THE EFFECT OF A PROLONGED SHORTAGE OF ELECTRICITY

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The high-tech world and the world of high-tech industries are totally dependent on a reliable uninterrupted supply of electrical energy. The present unreliability of the California electrical energy supply, and the long time it will take to remedy the shortages, could have profound effects on California's high-tech industry.

One expected effect will be the migration of some of that industry to parts of the country with reliable electric power.

Summary

Put in its simplest terms, *population growth in California is probably the principal factor in the present electrical crisis in California.*

Reports lead one to believe that population growth in Colorado is creating the same growth of demand in excess of supply which will shortly give us a California-style electrical energy crisis. Colorado has experienced enormous population growth recently, and some of the utility shortages reported from California are showing up in Colorado. Yet groups in Colorado, both governmental and private, spend enormous sums of money each year in advertising, seeking to get more people and more companies to move to Colorado.(1) The success of this campaign can only increase the demand for electrical energy, so unless strong corrective matters are taken now, these promotional efforts could cripple the economy of Colorado.

But there is a double whammy. *The escalation of electrical demand is the major factor in the recent astronomical increases in the price of natural gas in Colorado.*

Some new electrical generating plants are being built in Colorado, but most, if not all, are gas turbines that burn natural gas. The enormous gas consumption of these plants is certainly a major factor in creating the shortages of natural gas that are responsible for the recent large increase in the cost of natural gas to heat our homes and buildings. As this is written the news tells of a third large increase in natural gas rates that is being submitted to the Colorado PUC. The evening news has featured Colorado families that are very hard hit by these enormous increases in the gas rates. Many more such news stories can be expected.

The benefits of population growth accrue to a few, but the costs have to be borne by everyone.

Recommendations for Colorado

If the population of Colorado is going to continue to grow, the electric utilities in Colorado should be required to keep, at all times, a margin of generating capacity in excess of demand of about twenty percent.

The utilities should be required to build coal-fired plants with all of the emission clean-up technologies, so that the remaining supplies of natural gas can be saved to heat homes and buildings.

Moratorium on Population Growth

A good case can be made for calling for a moratorium on population growth in both California and Colorado until the states' residents can be assured that electricity and natural gas supplies are adequate for at least ten years without any need for further big increases in the prices of electricity and gas.

The last U.S. President who was concerned about population growth in the U.S. was Richard Nixon, whose Rockefeller Commission concluded that it could find no benefit to the U.S. from any further U.S. population growth.

In spite of this timely warning, the population growth rate of the United States is approximately one percent per year. If Colorado's population growth rate exceeds one percent per year, then we are being asked to accept more than our share of the burden. Electricity shortages are a part of that burden.

Conclusion

It seems most urgent that the Colorado Governor and the Legislature address these electric generating capacity situations as soon as possible. By being honest in assessing the problem, we may be able to find solutions that avoid the crisis that the public officials of California have allowed to happen in their state. ■

NOTE

(1) A twenty-four-page special advertising section calling for people and industries to pack up and move to Colorado appears in the October 2, 2000 issue of *Forbes Magazine*. Because of targeted advertising, this section has not been found in issues of *Forbes* delivered to Colorado addresses.

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The Prescient Dr. Hardin

We are pleased to reproduce here an editorial from *Science* magazine, the publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, (12 February 1971, Volume 171, Number 3971). AAAS is the premier science organization in the United States, if not the world.

Dr. Hardin wrote this editorial thirty years ago. It is just as timely today as it was back then. See the last two paragraphs in particular. Such foresight fits our definition of "prescience."

The data show that per capita electricity consumption in California has been flat for 20 years (See Ric Oberlinks's article on page ?? of this issue.) Yet during that time the population of the Golden State has increased from 24 to 34 million — a 40 percent increase.

The electricity problems that confront California trace not to a failure of conservation or inefficient use of electricity, but to growth in numbers of users.

What will happen to energy demand if California expands to 50 million or more, as is projected? Will it be possible to meet the demand, or will there be chronic energy shortages? Now is the time to find out and perhaps change demographic course if we don't like the prospect that is staring us in the face.

JOHN H. TANTON
Publisher, *The Social Contract*

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SCIENCE

12 February 1971, Volume 171, Number 3971

Nobody Ever Dies of Overpopulation

Those of us who are deeply concerned about population and the environment—"econuts," we're called—are accused of seeing herbicides in trees, pollution in running brooks, radiation in rocks, and overpopulation everywhere. There is merit in the accusation.

I was in Calcutta when the cyclone struck East Bengal in November 1970. Early dispatches spoke of 15,000 dead, but the estimates rapidly escalated to 2,000,000 and then dropped back to 500,000. A nice round number: it will do as well as any, for we will never know. The nameless ones who died, "unimportant" people far beyond the fringes of the social power structure, left no trace of their existence. Pakistani parents repaired the population loss in just 40 days, and the world turned its attention to other matters.

What killed those unfortunate people? The cyclone, newspapers said. But one can just as logically say that overpopulation killed them. The Gangetic delta is barely above sea level. Every year several thousand people are killed in quite ordinary storms. If Pakistan were not overcrowded, no sane man would bring his family to such a place. Ecologically speaking, a delta belongs to the river and the sea; man obtrudes there at his peril.

In the web of life every event has many antecedents. Only by an arbitrary decision can we designate a single antecedent as "cause." Our choice is biased—biased to protect our egos against the onslaught of unwelcome truths. As T. S. Eliot put it in *Burnt Norton*:

> Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.

Were we to identify overpopulation as the cause of a half-million deaths, we would threaten ourselves with a question to which we do not know the answer: *How can we control population without recourse to repugnant measures?* Fearfully we close our minds to an inventory of possibilities. Instead, we say that a cyclone caused the deaths, thus relieving ourselves of responsibility for this and future catastrophes. "Fate" is *so* comforting.

Every year we list tuberculosis, leprosy, enteric diseases, or animal parasites as the "cause of death" of millions of people. It is well known that malnutrition is an important antecedent of death in all these categories; and that malnutrition is connected with overpopulation. But overpopulation is not called the cause of death. We cannot bear the thought.

People are dying now of respiratory diseases in Tokyo, Birmingham, and Gary, because of the "need" for more industry. The "need" for more food justifies overfertilization of the land, leading to eutrophication of the waters, and lessened fish production—which leads to more "need" for food.

What will we say when the power shuts down some fine summer on our eastern seaboard and several thousand people die of heat prostration? Will we blame the weather? Or the power companies for not building enough generators? Or the econuts for insisting on pollution controls?

One thing is certain: we won't blame the deaths on overpopulation. No one ever dies of overpopulation. It is unthinkable.

—GARRETT HARDIN, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

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The Failed Mission of the INS

Testimony before Congressional committee

by Roy Beck

[On Tuesday, May 15, 2001, the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the "INS and the Executive Office for Immigration Review." Roy Beck, executive director of NumbersUSA.com was asked to testify on the issue of interior enforcement against illegal immigration. Before preparing his testimony, NumbersUSA solicited testimonies of citizen activists who or work in communities in which illegal immigration is being ignored by the INS. Dozens of citizens stepped forward and e-mailed us long memos either on how illegal immigration is being ignored by the INS in their community or how they, as an INS agent or other law enforcement officer are not allowed to enforce the law.

All of the accounts received were woven into a 19-page written testimony that was designed to make a compelling case for why the INS and the House Immigration Subcommittee this year should put top priority into ensuring that the INS always responds when any community asks for help in disrupting the illegal immigrant industry.

Interior enforcement is about identifying any of the 6 to 11 million illegal aliens who already have gotten into the country and then deporting them or making their lives so uncomfortable they will leave. It is about busting up day-labor hiring sites of illegals, about enforcing employer sanctions at the workplace, about arresting illegals anytime the police just happen on to them, etc.]

***Roy Beck** is director of the website NumbersUSA.com which offers a way to send faxes to Members of Congress about immigration issues and includes separate immigration voting records and co-sponsorship profiles on every Member of Congress.*

The staff and citizen network of NumbersUSA.com thank the chairman and the committee for this opportunity to address issues of general oversight of the INS.

NumbersUSA.com was founded as a non-profit, nonpartisan organization in 1997 to advocate for key recommendations of the national, bi-partisan Commission on Immigration Reform. Those recommendations were set aside by Congress in 1996 to be addressed at a later date. As they have yet to be addressed, we are hopeful that this committee this year will renew the important work of the Commission and its chairman, the late Barbara Jordan.

Service for communities outside the rule of law

We would like to use this occasion to stress the importance of re-establishing the "service" in the Immigration and Naturalization Service. American citizens of all races and walks of life, native-born and foreign-born, in communities in every region of this country are failing to receive even the most rudimentary service when they call on the INS to deal with the rising tide of illegal immigrants.

In preparation for this testimony we communicated with citizens in more than two dozen communities where immigration laws are violated openly and without apparent consequence.

The general mood and feeling of helplessness we found is perhaps best described in a May 7, 2001, *Newsday* article by Bob Weimer, a columnist for the Long Island newspaper. He was specifically writing about the Long Island community of Farmingville where citizens have organized and met repeatedly with the INS and every other level of government — to no avail. Weimer describes the current scene in Farmingville, but he could easily be describing a hundred other communities:

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The [INS] service's well-documented inability to do anything about the rising influx of undocumented aliens on Long Island demonstrates a complete bureaucratic breakdown. It has failed to perform its mission....

The word goes south; the aliens come north, and anarchy spreads and becomes routine. Every day in a thousand ways laws are broken. Congress made it a crime to aid, abet, conceal or induce an alien to enter and/or reside in the United States illegally....

Farmingville teems with undocumented aliens, but Suffolk police, state officials and the hopeless INS manage consistently to look elsewhere while immigration law, tax law, labor law and local housing and sanitary codes are flouted. Landlords pack the aliens into hazardous and substandard housing. Contractors work them off the books, thereby avoiding all the nasty little charges and levies associated with legal labor transactions.

Federal and state laws are broken in a thousand different ways every day at hiring sites on Long Island.... [After all the efforts of citizens to persuade the INS to enforce the law] nothing has changed. The influx continues. The burden on the town's worn-out housing stock mounts. Local officials, state officials and federal officials continue to avoid the issue....

The people of Farmingville feel they have been abandoned. They feel the cold wind of anarchy.

INS abandonment of American communities

The evidence is strong that, except for deporting those who have committed aggravated felonies, the INS indeed has abandoned most American communities and left them outside the rule of law as far as immigration laws are concerned. Citizens cannot understand how illegal immigrants are allowed to openly gather in large numbers without any attempt by the INS to apprehend them, or at least disrupt their lawbreaking. To most citizens, the INS need never do any special investigating or tracking to apprehend scores of illegal aliens every day in most cities. They merely have to go where major numbers of illegal immigrants are well known to gather.

From Houston, a landlord described to me how the apartment complex she and her husband owned — as well as other neighboring complexes — began to be filled by illegal aliens. The owners called the INS with the information. "We got help only when there were murders," she said. Eventually, most of the residents were illegal aliens, living openly in a sanctuary where the federal law apparently refused to reach.

In Frankfort, Indiana, the newspaper reported that the head of a local immigrant services group said that, of 3,500 foreign-born residents of the area, about 70 percent are illegal. The uninitiated, upon seeing so much lawbreaking openly acknowledged in an easy-to-control rural area, might expect to see federal vans arriving the next day to start loading up the lawbreakers. But nothing happened. Illegal aliens are so sure that INS will never make them leave the country that they stage parades and rallies calling attention to their illegal status as they push for government benefits and U.S. citizenship.

Perhaps the greatest outrage to American citizens is the open congregating of illegal workers on their communities' streets. Although there are some legal foreign workers mixed in, the undocumented status of many or most is widely known by all in the community. Said one citizen: "In every job I have ever had, I have always been asked to prove my citizenship/legal residency. Can you tell me why the hundreds of day laborers that converge each day at the West Los Angeles site three blocks from my apartment do not have to do the same? The INS deliberately ignores this blatant, daily lawbreaking."

Refusal of the INS to cooperate with local law enforcement agencies is another source of bitterness. I spent six months in 1996 on a book tour for my immigration book published by W.W. Norton & Company. On nearly every call-in radio show, a local policeman, sheriff's deputy or highway patrolman would call and tell me a story about apprehending a van-load or a worksite-full of illegal aliens, calling INS and then being told to release them if they hadn't committed a major felony. The problem seemed

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especially pronounced in states like Pennsylvania not known for high illegal alien traffic.

Increasingly, local law enforcement won't even bother paying attention to the illegality of residents or call the INS because of years of neglect by that agency. This breeds even more contempt among the citizenry for the idea that they live in a society of laws. A TV photographer in Georgia told me that he has gone on enough INS operations that he believes he can accurately spot cars filled with illegal aliens rather than legal foreign workers. He said,

> *I once followed a conversion van that was an obvious load of illegal aliens. I followed the van for 65 miles and called at least five law enforcement agencies, but not one would respond. I passed three patrol cars along the Interstate and called their dispatcher who would not dispatch them. I have tried to report the same at other times and had the same reaction.*

"Increasingly, local law enforcement won't even bother paying attention to the illegality of residents or call the INS because of years of neglect by that agency."

Rebuffed citizen assistance

When citizens first encounter the widespread breaking of immigration laws in their community, they tend to assume that the federal government has an agency that will want to know. But the INS seems to make no effort to enlist the help of the citizenry in its duties. A Minnesota citizen commented to me: "Did you know there is no number in the phone book for reporting lawbreaking to the INS? All the listed numbers are for 'benefits.' None of them are for law enforcement." A North Carolina citizen said every time he calls the INS main phone number, he gets a recording. He has yet to find a way to talk to even an operator.

Not surprisingly, many citizens don't even try to get help; they just assume that nothing will happen. "Illegal aliens have taken over our neighborhood," said a resident near downtown Washington DC. "We know these people are illegal. It is obvious. They have turned our area into a drug war zone and taken over. We've lost everything, and nobody does anything." But she admitted that she had never even thought of calling the INS for help.

Citizens and local law enforcement agencies all over the country would help the INS to identify the immigration lawbreakers if they were only given a chance and a little encouragement. Instead, citizens are either rebuffed or told by sympathetic INS officers that the "orders from above" won't allow them to enforce the law. From Las Vegas, Raleigh, Prescott, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and many points in between, we were told by citizens that INS agents had told them variously: "Not permitted to bother any alien at their domicile, any recreation play ground or place of worship." "Not permitted to make vehicle stops when reasonably sure that the occupants might be illegal aliens, based on many years of experience and training." "No illegal alien discovered at highly publicized companies has been terminated, deported nor the firm fined because the INS is working on other arrangements."

An Arizona woman living 35 miles from the Mexican border told me she witnesses,

> *...[daily] hordes of illegal aliens heading north, both in vehicles and on foot, sometimes in groups of more than a hundred. The border Patrol agents in the field, at least for the most part, are doing the best they can. The problem lies with our governmental hierarchy that won't let them do their job because of policies fueled by payoffs from businesses that want the cheap labor. The border Patrol "grunts" out here are many times told to "not see" groups of illegals, which as a result, continue unhindered into the land of milk and honey to take jobs from American citizens.*
>
> *The message we are sending into Mexico is insanely contradictory; on the one hand we put an armed force on the border to stop anyone from illegally entering the country and on the other hand, we have hundreds of businesses*

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actively recruiting these same people. I spoke only last week to a friend who does business in Mexico who told me he sees representatives from American companies openly recruiting.

One exasperated citizen remarked after being repeatedly told that his local INS office would not be levying fines or deporting apprehended illegal aliens, 'It appears that the local INS has metamorphosed from an agency enforcing U.S. borders or employment related immigration laws into an illegal-immigrant service agency. Clearly, the local INS is deeply involved in wide-scale harboring of illegal aliens."

The view from inside the INS

The citizens' words about the INS in general were often very harsh, perhaps unfairly so. But we do not overstate by saying that the INS has become a truly reviled agency among citizens seeking a sense of order in their communities.

To better understand why the INS leaves these citizens feeling like they live outside the reach of the rule of law, we solicited the views of people inside the INS. Our open request resulted in our receiving comments from more than two dozen INS officials and people who have retired both from on-the-ground jobs and from high INS echelons. As with the citizens we have quoted, we will do our best to help you talk directly with any of these human resources. The experience of talking with so many INS officials and citizens in impacted communities has been enlightening and sobering and one we recommend to the committee. We encourage the committee regularly to give a ready ear to both constituencies.

"The description of the work of the INS by the INS agents and officials is barely less harsh than that of the citizens who live daily with the results of the INS non-enforcement policies."

The description of the work of the INS by the INS agents and officials is barely less harsh than that of the citizens who live daily with the results of the INS non-enforcement policies. The overwhelming message that we draw from our interviews with INS people (and with most citizens who have had direct contact with INS agents) is that the INS is filled substantially with dedicated public servants who not only are willing to enforce our nation's immigration laws but are exceedingly disconcerted and disillusioned by their lack of authorization to do so.

Here are some of the comments from our INS sources:

Current regional and headquarters politically motivated policies prohibit us from enforcing immigration law in the interior for fear of offending a group or generating negative media attention. This includes joint operations with local law enforcement, the ability to work leads and tips without completing and forwarding a detailed "operation plan" through a maze-like chain of management to pick apart and review.

An agent who is popular in his community for aggressive apprehensions of illegal immigrants reports that when his numbers get too high, he is sent away for a few weeks to another city outside his region to supposedly help with office work there.

Recently in the Southeast, INS agents checked 20 suspects while looking for a fugitive illegal alien felon. They discovered that only two of them were legal residents. But they let all 18 illegal aliens go because their orders were that they didn't have the resources to detain them.

We need the ability to immediately be able to respond to citizen complaints and take action on day laborers, without fear of media attention or criticism, and accomplish these things at our own district level, without headquarters interference, backpedaling or second-guessing.

Another source comments, "Twenty or thirty years ago, responding to local calls was a priority."

"Local law enforcement agencies are disgusted with us and don't even bother calling any more since they know we won't or can't respond," says another.

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An experienced INS officer says: "We need an employer sanctions program back — without a maze of 'operational plans' before entering a business, notifying businesses before we arrive, more warrants served on scofflaw businesses and serious response to citizen complaints."

Finally, a source tells us, "The enforcement people in INS would really like to start doing our jobs like we did before we were castrated by the policies of the last decade."

Although many of our INS sources did not know each other, their descriptions of what is wrong with the system were remarkably similar. And their suggestions for how to turn around the agency were also similar. I offer you my distillation of the principles the INS officials stated to give you some benchmarks to test on your own. We encourage this committee to probe the wisdom in the ranks of the retired and agents on the beat and see if you find the same thing.

Principles for turning the tide on illegal immigration

I believe that if you seriously probe to find the views of the rank and file in the INS and of retired INS officers, you will discover them suggesting a set of principles very much like the following that emerged from our interviews. Some of these require congressional participation and are flagged by a notation at the end of the item.

1. Nothing will turn the tide on illegal immigration without the re-instatement of interior enforcement. Over the last decade, interior enforcement has been systematically dismantled until virtually all that is left is the deportation of people who commit felonies other than breaking immigration laws. In neighborhoods all over America, citizens are seething because they can so easily see this dismantling. "Interior enforcement" means detecting, detaining and deporting illegal aliens from America's communities in all regions, not just along the borders. "Any alien that makes it in now is almost guaranteed a life without interruption by INS or the Border Patrol."

2. Putting more people on the border won't do much good unless people in other countries think they could be sent back if they succeed in getting past the Border Patrol. "Throwing more agents at the border won't stop the flow without interior enforcement." Even people whose primary career focus has been the border said the best immediate help for controlling the border would be beefing up interior enforcement. It is the lack of interior enforcement that entices so many to risk their lives to illegally enter the country across deserts, in unsafe trucks and train cars, and welded inside ship cargo units.

"Putting more people on the border won't do much good unless people in other countries think they could be sent back if they succeed in getting past the Border Patrol."

3. Interior enforcement relies on creating credible fear among all illegal aliens that they could get caught and, if caught, could be deported. Swift, firm enforcement on just a few can cause many to decide to return home if the enforcement appears possible on every kind of illegal alien. Today, only illegal aliens who break other laws have any significant fear. One officer said: "You have to reduce the comfort level of being an illegal immigrant. Right now, you can bring your family here and live like Americans. We have to make it so they are always looking over their shoulder." The INS needs more money to ensure swift processing and deportation for a credible number of illegal aliens out of each community. When the illegal aliens in those communities see people disappear and not come back, they will begin to think seriously about whether they want to live with that kind of uncertainty. This requires resources to ensure that a certain random percentage of illegal aliens who are apprehended will be personally escorted through every stage of the process until they are out of the country. CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEEDED: Ensure sufficient funding.

4. For the most part, new laws are not needed to solve the problem. "There has been too much reinventing of the wheel instead of concentrating on putting the

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resources behind laws already in place." Let the agents use the tools they had in the 1980s, and especially in the 1950s and 1960s, and they can make an incredible dent in the millions of illegal alien population. Most of the tools still exist under law but have been taken away by administrative decision.

5. Invest in an identification system that will allow every agent to get prints on all apprehended aliens and to check the prints before considering letting them loose with a ticket to appear in court later. Since there isn't enough jail space to detain every illegal alien until a hearing date, it is imperative that agents be able to jail the ones who are repeat offenders and who have a record of having failed to show up at a previous hearing. Reliance on the FBI print system currently forces agents to wait a couple of weeks for prints to be processed. Agents need something that will report back in an hour or two. The INS has such a system in limited use primarily on the border but it already has exceeded capacity. The INS needs to determine the fastest, most efficient way to resolve this problem and move forward with the extra funding provided by Congress. CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEEDED: Request proposals and sufficiently fund a system once satisfied.

"Since there isn't enough jail space to detain every illegal alien until a hearing date, it is imperative that agents be able to jail the ones who are repeat offenders and who have a record of having failed to show up at a previous hearing."

6. Encourage the apprehension and finger-printing of every possible illegal alien, even if there aren't enough resources to deport most of them. This not only will be disruptive to their communities — especially if people are randomly pulled from the pool to go through the swift deportation system — but it will kick in the 10-year exclusion rule on them, preventing them from benefitting from any legal access to the United States. Widely publicizing this can start to act as a real deterrent. CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEEDED: Congress must resist constantly violating its own laws by giving illegal aliens loopholes around the 10-year exclusion rule.

7. Make sure that aliens who enter illegally after being deported are treated as felons as the law allows, earning them guaranteed jail time. Most illegal aliens break immigration laws to make money. They can't make money in jail. A better fingerprint system will begin finding these "repeaters" in large quantities. It won't take long for the word to get out that "repeating" bears risk of serious inconvenience to the business plan.

8. The INS must try for the first time to enforce the 1986 employer sanctions law. Everybody agrees that pressures from those who economically benefit from trafficking in illegal workers has kept the INS from ever seriously attempting to carry out the law. Disrupt the economic gain from illegal immigration and there won't be much reason to break the law. A relentless presence at street-hiring sites is bound to disburse the illegal aliens and leave the jobs for those at the sites who have a legal right to be here.

9. Not much will happen unless the top echelon and middle management of INS believe in enforcing immigration laws. "The reason for the problems is that the INS force has been handcuffed by its leaders." The overwhelming opinion among the rank and file is that the leadership of the INS has been filled with people who favor illegal immigration or who are politically afraid of those groups in American society who gain money and power off illegal immigration. The mission of the INS has been corrupted and cannot be restored to provide service to the American people again unless there is a wholesale change in the top echelons of the agency. As in other parts of the Justice Department, people should not be allowed to hold jobs if they believe they can pick and choose which laws to enforce.

10. Congress must stop making the INS job impossible by enticing millions more illegal aliens through amnesties and incremental amnesties. "The amnesty

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programs have devastated our enforcement efforts." The various kinds of amnesties approved in 1997, 1998 and 2000 — in addition to the memory of the giant one in 1986 — have sent a message to the rest of the world that the Border Patrol and INS agents are merely for show, that the United States actually wants people to come here illegally. "I have talked to many illegal migrants coming back after deportation or voluntary departure. They will tell you that they are saving all their papers that show they have been here and are waiting for the next amnesty program." CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEEDED: Members of Congress need to publicly take the no-amnesty pledge to send a signal to the rest of the world.

11. Congress should provide the funding so that the INS can pledge 100% service to those communities that are calling for help in removing illegal immigrants. Quick Response Teams (QRTs) have been tried but not properly funded. Their presence will inspire more local authorities to identify illegal aliens. The first INS interview can often be conducted over the phone. If the INS agent determines probability, the alien will stay in local custody for no more than a few days until QRT arrives. "We have a lot of older experienced retired agents who can return to work on a one-year contract to work the cities that have large numbers of known illegal migrants. This approach will give a wakeup call that illegal migration will have consequences." Never again should a local law enforcement agency be told to release a suspected illegal immigrant into the public. CONGRESSIONAL ACTION NEEDED: Sufficient funding for a credible QRT effort, with a pledge to expand funding as long as Americans in local communities still are reporting INS abandonment.

Conclusion

The chairman of the Commission on Immigration Reform, the late Barbara Jordan, testified before this committee on Feb. 24, 1995. She said:

> *Credibility in immigration policy can be summed up in one sentence: Those who should get in, get in; those who should be kept out, are kept out; and those who should not be here will be required to leave.*

This committee's oversight task is an incredibly important and challenging one because the INS currently is making virtually no effort to ensure that "those who should not be here are required to leave."

And because of that lack of interior enforcement, our amplified efforts on the border to ensure that "those who should be kept out, are kept out" are failing. Around the world, the word is out: if you can succeed in evading the U.S. Border Patrol on your way in, and if you do not commit an aggravated felony once you travel a few miles into this country, you have virtually no chance of ever being forced to leave. With that kind of incentive, would-be illegal aliens around the world will do almost anything — including risking dying in the desert — to outmaneuver our Border Patrol.

The general spirit of lawlessness in which so many communities find themselves tends to create a cycle of behavior that only moves the communities further toward anarchy. A leader of one group of citizens lamented that quiet homeowners after repeated frustration with the INS turned to the streets in public demonstrations outside their general experience: "Citizens are forced to the streets to protest their own government because of its constructive abandonment of its duties to its citizens. Citizens are arrested while illegal aliens go about their business freely and act contrary to the law, with impunity."

On the border, citizens have drawn national news coverage for taking up arms and taking the law into their own hands as they defend their property from an invasion of sometimes a hundred illegal immigrants a day. These developments presage darker impulses that could be stirred. The abandonment of the enforcement of the law by the INS fans the embers of vigilantism that seem never to be fully extinguished in the spirits of human beings seeking a society of order over disorder.

If this committee does not find a way to help the INS re-institute credible interior enforcement, the amount of money provided in the INS budget is of no particular consequence — except for the amount of the taxpayers' dollars that are being wasted. ■

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Immigration to the U.S.

It depopulates Mexico and overpopulates America

by Samuel Francis

The biggest problem for the not-very-bustling metropolis of Casa Blanca, Mexico, is, according to a recent story in the *New York Times*, whether it is going to exist in the near future. "The question we always ask," says one of its dwindling and aging residents, "is, 'Will our community survive?' We are running out of people."

That, of course, doesn't mean that the Mexican birth rate is falling. What it means is that too many Mexicans are bidding adios to their homeland and heading for the greener side of the border in El Norte — the United States. And like everything else bad that happens to Mexico and other Third World utopias-that-might-have-been, it's all the fault of El Gringo.

As the *New York Times* explains, ("Migrant Exodus Bleeds Mexico's Heartland," 17 June) Mexicans for many years have tracked back and forth across the border to find work, welfare, and money in the United States and to fetch the swag back to the locals. But now, "Migration experts say that with a growing United States law enforcement presence on the border, illegal crossings have become so difficult — and even deadly — that many migrants and their families settle permanently in the United States, rather than risk a repeated crossing."

If only we were kind enough not to enforce our border laws and just let anyone cross who wanted to, then the depopulation of central Mexico wouldn't be happening. It never occurs to the Times, let alone the Mexicans, that if they stayed in their own country where they belong, the depopulation wouldn't be happening either.

Nor does it occur to the Mexican government, which is insistent on pushing more and more of its own people out of their own country and into ours. The Times again explains why, at least in part.

Migration is a multibillion dollar venture for Mexico. Immigrants send home an estimated $6.3 billion each year. That money — the nation's third largest source of income, behind oil and tourism — has done more than provide relatives money for food, clothing, and medicine. Migrants also pool their money and fill in for strapped or corrupt local governments by supporting public works projects that range from paving streets and installing potable water systems to refurbishing churches and furnishing classrooms with computers.

So the truth is that for years Americans have been subsidizing whatever passes for progress in Mexico through the money they pay to illegal immigrants, as well as helping to line the pockets of the kleptocracy that runs Mexico. No wonder the Mexican government doesn't want to do much to slow down illegal immigration and gets testy when anyone in this country suggests that more be done.

The result of the virtual abolition of the border — for all the enforcement efforts on our side, the fact is that virtually anyone can cross if he wants to — is the depopulation of one and the over-population of the other. The state of Michaocan, for instance, in central Mexico, sees some 50,000 of its natives leave each year, with about half staying in the United States. There are now more Mexicans from this province in California, Texas, and Illinois than there are in Michaocan itself.

The depopulation doesn't really help Mexico, despite the loot the immigrants import, because whatever human talents and skills the country might need

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Samuel Francis, Ph.D. *is a nationally-syndicated columnist.* *© 2001, Creators Syndicate, reprinted by permission.*

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and be able to use tend to get out as soon as possible. Those who remain probably aren't of much use for anything. Now, if the migrants who never come back stop sending money back as well, the result could be further economic collapse in their home areas, prompting still more immigration in the future.

Meanwhile, while California's Gov. Gray Davis and President Bush bicker at each other over energy policy, the truth is that there would be no energy crisis in California at all if it were not for the massive number of immigrants who have swelled the state's population over the last thirty years. As demographer Virginia Abernethy points out in a recent column, California energy consumption declined per capita over the last twenty years, but the state's population grew by forty-three percent in the same period. The reason for ninety-five percent of the population increase in the last decade has been immigration. Had those new heads not arrived to consume more energy, there would be no energy crisis in California — and no looming crisis for the nation.

While Americans have subsidized Mexican development, Mexicans and other immigrants have helped cause our energy crisis — as well as burdens on other resources and infrastructures. So we don't really need to hear more lectures about how Mexican depopulation is all our fault. If no more of them came and if the whole mass of them went home and stayed there, both countries would be better off. ■

George W. Bush Proposes an Amnesty

'Looking for love in all the wrong places'

by Diana Hull

The "steam" behind the new immigrant amnesty started building early last year. Illinois Congressman Luis Gutierrez proposed it in the form of a bill that delivered on President Clinton's promises to LULAC and MALDEF and the hundreds of groups that comprise the immigrant lobby.

"Illegal" is a pejorative word, so opposing illegal immigration is an easy position for elected officials to take. The hope is that by removing the onus of illegality by awarding an amnesty, the problem will go away, whereas actually doing something to stop the breaching of the U.S. border, is another matter entirely.

Because elected officials failed to act decisively, amnesty for illegal immigrants was first sold to the public in 1986 as a way of solving this difficult problem once and for all.

That was the supposed motive fifteen years ago when there were five million illegal immigrants in the United States, and that is claimed to be the motive today when there are eleven million illegal immigrants living among us.

But amnesties do not solve and only exacerbate the problem of illegal entry and increase rather than deter illegal immigration. That was the conclusion reached in an INS report of 12 October 2000 and

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subsequently ignored — an analysis released almost immediately after former INS Commissioner Doris Meissner resigned.

But despite this acknowledged policy failure that has changed California and the rest of the United States forever, our new President and his advisors are pushing for more of the same.

The only difference between the political parties on this issue is that Bill Clinton was sneaky in the way that he pursued it and tried to tack amnesty provisions onto unrelated congressional bills. For President Clinton amnesty was a promised payback to Hispanic supporters, but for George Bush, amnesty is fueled by a fantasy that he can seduce the Latino electorate.

In the case of both men, the wishes of the American people on this issue are as nothing to either of them, and they care not a whit about the "too many people" problem.

But what, if any, crisis will yet another amnesty resolve, and what new turmoil will be created by national leaders still looking for love in all the wrong places?

In addition to the fact that most Americans oppose it, there are other reasons to question the legitimacy of amnesty as a tool of immigration policy. The record is completely absent any history of rewards being used effectively in place of deterrence. Are immigration violations a special case where reverse motivation applies?

Before 1986, there were only three prior amnesties in all of US history. In 1865 and again in 1868, President Andrew Johnson granted amnesty to the supporters of the Confederacy. Then, almost a hundred years later, in 1977, President Carter forgave the draft resisters who had gone to live abroad during the Viet Nam war.

The purpose of these earlier amnesties was to heal internal rifts between the government and its own citizens — an attempt to bring together Americans torn apart by deeply held political differences. In those instances amnesties were successful in closing the book on specific internal wars and rebellions.

All three of these earlier amnesties were a one time forgiving, and hopefully forgetting, whereas recent amnesties have brought no reconciliation, only demands for more amnesties while inviting more of the behavior that prompted the forgiving in the first place.

The 1986 IRCA Amnesty was, in more ways than one, the "mother"' of the amnesty now being considered by the Bush administration. It was a program that fostered dishonesty in the recipients. It was originally intended for farm workers — a program that wildly underestimated the number of applicants who would apply for legalization, was the impetus for the ubiquitous counterfeit documents in circulation today, and failed totally to remove the magnet of jobs as promised. *New York Times* writer Robert Suro called the 1986 amnesty the most massive case of immigration fraud ever perpetrated on the American people.

So, do we really need to repeat this experience again? And how did *failure* like this create a precedent for what has become a continuing series of similar legislation?

The lesson is that forgiving and forgetting can only be successful when the parties involved have significant ties to each other — ties more important than the struggle that separates them.

Considering that amnesty is not an appropriate strategy for solving illegal entry, solutions lie rather in insisting our borders and laws are respected. We need to rein in our super-indulgent society that tolerates cheating and where continuing amnesties have simply become the ultimate immigrant entitlement program. We shouldn't have to be opposing one amnesty after another. How about stopping the misapplication of the amnesty concept, which should never have been applied to illegal aliens in the first place? And let's remove that warm cuddling wrap that surrounds the word "amnesty" — wrong for a policy associated with so much treachery and so many abuses.

If the continuing demand for agricultural workers remains an issue, it would be a bargain in the end for government to make a major investment in advanced robotics technology for farmers.

We don't pick cotton by hand anymore, and instead of amnesties, we could modernize the way we get fruit off a tree and produce out of the ground. But we'll never invent advanced machinery so long as people are cheaper than technology, another reason to label amnesty such a regressive social policy. ■

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Flirting with Cataclysm, Disease, and Famine

The potent three antidotes for excess fecundity

Book Review by Craig A. Straub

Lindsey Grant's *Too Many People* is a handbook that provides an introductory synopsis of population growth issues to the undergraduate audience and supports the critical thinker in awakening those numb to the impacts of population growth on the planet. Grant makes a strong case for saving the future by entering into a sustainable relationship with nature, preceded by ending growth and embracing a smaller population.

Evidence for curbing growth is explored in the areas of natural resources, socioeconomics, and energy:

> *Humans and the Neolithic age have been proficient at disturbing and displacing natural systems, notably through forest destruction, land erosion and species extinction. With the advent of the industrial revolution, we have multiplied our disturbance as we extract minerals from the air and the Earth's crust, invent new chemicals and dump them heedlessly into the biosphere. Now we are on the threshold of adding genetic manipulation – deliberately redesigning animals and plants – that may be as destabilizing as the earlier two revolutions. We are changing the Earth without having demonstrated that we know how to manage it.* (p. 2)

Grant inadvertently skims the edges of plant warfare, the combat of non-native plant species. Native plants contribute to the health of an ecosystem and provide natural sources of food and fiber. The use of herbicides are linked to population growth, neurological deterioration, skin problems, reproductive disorders, and cancer. To support maximum crop yields in an effort to feed a growing world, herbicides are applied to eliminate weedy competition. Herbicides are also applied to eradicate aggressive plant species in an effort to support healthy ecosystems. Introduction of non-native plants into the U.S. is due to an exploding population, increased international travel, and expanded international trade. Some non-native plant species become aggressive and displace native plants in woodlands, wetlands, prairies, and other natural areas. Non-native plant species reduce local native plant communities, disrupt insect-plant associations for native seed dispersal, and serve as host reservoirs for plant pathogens. Approximately two hundred native plant species have become extinct since the 1800s and five thousand species in North America are threatened with extinction. About two billion dollars are spent each year to combat non-native aggressive plant species in the U.S.

Too Many People: The Case for Reversing Growth
by Lindsey Grant
Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press
94 pages, $7.95 softcover

Synergisms are provided to illustrate the importance of the natural resource base and the implications of human habits:

> *The loss of forests changes the water cycle. No longer held back by the trees, stream flows become abrupt and erratic. Streams become arroyos, alternating between dry beds and destructive floods. Neither is used for agriculture, and the floods wash out cropland. Production suffers, intensifying the need to carve more land out of the forests, and the loss of trees contributes to global warming, which in turn contributes to intensified storms and droughts and crop losses – and the need for still more arable land.* (p. 18)

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Grant stresses that the most current fundamental issue on Earth is the collision between biology and human growth. In the twentieth Century, the world's population quadrupled from 1.5 to six billion, adding three times as many humans to the earth's surface than in all history. We are losing mammals, birds and fish of endangered status as a result of habitat destruction from human activities. The solution is to restore and reconstruct the ecosystems we have destroyed, creating sanctuaries and protected areas.

> *...The single best way to protect those species is to scale back our demands on the land and the economic activities that destroy them, and we are unlikely to get very far with such an idea unless we reduce our populations.* (p. 62)

The classic example of applying biological principles to human behavior is the Darwinian theory of natural selection, a scientific idea referring to the future. Natural selection is a consequence following the consistent ability of various species to reproduce in a competitive world of limited capacity. All successful species have the ability to bear more young than their environment can support, leading to overpopulation and survival of the fittest. Human population growth was limited by high mortality until medical advances disrupted such a fate. Family planning permits the human species to control growth by regulating fertility, rather than being controlled by the chaotic whims of death, disease, and social disorder.

> *Family planning is not just something that we are entitled to practice, independently. It is something that the Earth itself badly needs to escape the damage of continued human population growth. It is essential to the preservation of ecological balance in the face of a species grown far too successful. Within our species, it is desperately needed by the poor and fertile of the world so they can escape the evolutionary curse of excess fecundity and so their children will not be trapped in high mortality.* (pp. 69-70)

One lesson from history is the Black Death of the fourteenth century where the plague was followed by the Renaissance. The combination of an inefficient feudal system and growing population reduced the population to paupers. The plague generated an extreme labor shortage, leaving surviving sons with doubled land. The ratio of land to people improved, providing farmers with spare money and enough land to produce enough food for recovering cities. The result was a smaller and richer Europe resulting in the Renaissance.

"Grant calls for a new American mind-set to acquire the understanding that growth is no longer a solution to our economic and employment problems."

Grant calls for a new American mind-set to acquire the understanding that growth is no longer a solution to our economic and employment problems. The primary mission of technology should be to mitigate pollution and waste generated by earlier technologies. Growth pollutes and distorts natural systems, and more studies should be conducted to assess the impacts of technology and human activity. The U.S. should lead this effort in the industrial world and assist other countries in developing their own capabilities.

The author also proposes to view immigration from a longer perspective. In the current debate, industry wants more cheap immigrant labor and the idealistic protagonists argue we owe others the chance of our forebears. Opponents point to the cost, social strains, threat of national identity, and impact of wages on natives and immigrants.

> *The debate usually bypasses the central point. The fundamental issue posed by mass immigration is demographic. It is the impact on our population growth. Two-thirds of this country's anticipated growth in this century will result from migration, and this will have profound effects on our environment and our dream of a sustainable society. Given the magnitudes involved, an effort to mitigate the population growth of the less developed world by absorbing it is to put us in their predicament, without making a significant contribution to alleviating their plight.* (p. 90)

As the author indicates, this book is a plea, not a

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model. This book heightens the necessity and requirement for many sequels of individual models for reversing growth. Every sovereign nation is responsible for living within the limit of its resources and for suffering the consequences of not doing so. The U.S. has a duty to itself and the world to stabilize U.S. population to reduce the burden on global natural resources and to serve as a model for other nations.

Hard cases make good science and ethics. The allocation of scarce resources is a good example. The wisdom of triage can be fully appreciated only if we recognize the inevitability of competition; and competition between members of the same species is inescapable so long as death is not a sufficiently effective thinning agent, which we prevent it from being with medical advances. Life, cooperation, and compassion are all good things, but we can have too much of any one good thing, considered in isolation and elevated to the status of an absolute good. The central problem, both philosophically and practically, is to find acceptable ways of weighing opposing goods (with due regard for the interests of posterity) so that we and our descendants can lead healthy and balanced lives (Hardin, 1980).

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Unlimited Growth Stopped in its Tracks

Book Review by Anne Manetas

The Sunday morning talk shows are host to a variety of pundits debating the week's hottest policy issues. But on one issue it appears that a consensus has been reached: Whether the economy is backtracking or headed full-steam ahead, the belief that economic growth can be sustained in perpetuity trumps all. Sunday morning is for many a time of worship and reflection, but every day a national coalition of media, politicians, and business leaders kneel at the altar of economic growth. It is the creed to which we subscribe, the mantra we subconsciously chant.

An example of this national phenomenon can be found in the debate over the energy crisis in California. Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, business leaders and environmentalists are all divided as to how to solve the problem of a demand for energy that has outpaced supply in California (some don't even agree on the problem), yet solutions from all sides rest on the premise that California's economic growth will and should continue.

Shoveling Fuel for a Runaway Train

by Brian Czech
Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
206 pages, $22.50

In *Shoveling Fuel for a Runaway Train,* wildlife biologist Brian Czech addresses this pursuit of the "American mega-economy" and its effects on long-term ecological sustainability. Czech convincingly and in a very readable way argues that perpetual economic growth is not sustainable, and calls for nothing short of a revolution to establish an alternative economic paradigm. A tall order to be sure, and one that might strike some readers as so unlikely as to deter them from reading further, but a fair hearing indicates that Czech's thesis may prove to be one of the pillars upon which a sustainable future rests.

In order to make the case for a new economic

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system, Czech first exposes the "runaway train" of economic growth. From the highest levels of federal agencies to political candidates to the media, economic growth has become a national goal. (Interestingly, Czech's writing harkens back to similar tracts from the beginning of the modern environmental movement challenging the religion of growth in the United States. Yet thirty years later, Czech is virtually alone in his writing and the congregation of growth is larger than ever.) "American society has no greater obsession than with economic growth," writes Czech.

"Czech's proposal will raise concerns for some about a cooling economy, layoffs, and potential economic collapse, not to mention those who will claim it is just plain unrealistic."

This school of thought is supported and perpetuated by neoclassical economists. Having moved fundamentally away from the big issues (distribution of wealth, power of nations, etc.) of the classical economists such as Malthus, Smith, and Ricardo, neoclassical economists rely on the principles of substitutability, efficiency, and human capital to posit there is no limit to economic growth.

Paramount among the neoclassical economists was the late Julian Simon, Cato Institute fellow and author of *Ultimate Resource 2*. Czech describes Simon as the "most influential proponent of unlimited economic growth of all time," whose optimism and selective attention to the facts allowed him to become the champion of human intellect and perseverance overcoming ecological limits to economic growth. Simon's legacy is alive and well today thanks to a host of disciples, such as Stephen Moore of the Club for Growth, who espouse economic growth and the conditions that ostensibly fuel it, namely continued population growth. But the neoclassical assumption that economic growth can continue indefinitely begins to break down in the face of a finite natural resource base and limited space.

Loss of rural land to urban sprawl, rolling blackouts, and water shortages all attest to the crisis facing the "economically impacted environment" as Czech says. Ecological economists, unlike neoclassical economists, recognize physical and biological limits to economic growth. Rather, ecological economists (the most notable among them being Herman Daly, professor of Economics at the University of Maryland and author of *Toward a Steady-State Economy*, 1973) see the steady state economy as an alternative to economic growth. Unlike a continually growing economy, the steady state depends upon a stable population and minimal throughput of capital. (At this point it is important to note a difference Czech is careful to point out between ecological economics and environmental economics. As Czech suggests, environmental economics is a subset of neoclassical economics. It is neoclassical economics applied to environmental affairs, and therefore rests upon the ideal of continued economic growth.)

The steady state is the new economic paradigm Czech recommends for ecological sustainability, but achieving it requires fundamental societal changes: "a steady-state revolution."

Putting an end to "economic bloating" requires a non-violent social revolution that equals the academic revolution of ecological economics. This is a revolution in public opinion that must be a process by which "the virtually ubiquitous cherishing of economic growth is transformed into an equally ubiquitous castigation of economic growth." Utopian? Perhaps, but Czech's blueprint for change based on his definition of steady-state consumer levels makes it clear he is not just tilting at windmills.

Czech defines the top one percent of consumers as "Liquidators," those who liquidate capital for their own excess. Liquidators are the most conspicuous of consumers. The success of the steady-state revolution depends on castigation of the liquidators, which will be done by the Steady State and Amorphic classes. In Czech's hierarchy of consumers, "Steady-Staters" represent the bottom eighty percent in terms of personal consumption spending. Steady-staters are

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those who are largely responsible in their consumption patterns and are concerned about preserving the environment for future generations. This includes all of the poor, most of the middle class, and some of the rich. The remaining nineteen percent of consumers are what Czech calls the "Amorphic class." These are the consumers below the liquidators who are generally well educated. In the steady-state revolution the Amorphic class should be "patiently tolerated" because the Steady-State class will need their support in creating disdain for the consumptive patters of the Liquidators. Czech's prescription for castigation of the Liquidators depends, in large part, upon women of all classes rejecting "liquidating males" as suitors, thereby removing the incentive of the liquidators to conspicuously consume and motivating them to reduce consumption. This process will result in a cooling of the economy and creation of the steady state.

Czech's proposal will raise concerns for some about a cooling economy, layoffs, and potential economic collapse, not to mention those who will claim it is just plain unrealistic. Czech offers suggestions as to why the steady-state revolution can become a reality and he assures the reader that in the ideal steady state economy, the standard of living is high enough for all to benefit. But regardless of the likelihood of his proposal, it bears relevance for those concerned about U.S. population size and sustainability issues.

Particularly important is Czech's challenge of the neoclassical sustained growth model. As University of Colorado professor of physics Al Bartlett says "In Growth we Trust" has become our national motto and this poses a major challenge for those who seek to stop population growth or urban sprawl, for example. In fact, the perpetual growth model has become so pervasive that even most environmental groups have bought into it. Understanding the degree to which the perpetual growth model has inundated our culture helps those seeking to stop growth (of population size, of urban land, etc.) understand the challenges they face. Furthermore, a stable population is required for the steady state, and herein lies common ground that advocates of the steady state and those seeking to stabilize U.S. population should explore.

Czech's treatise on the steady-state revolution should give pause to anyone who is concerned about the future our younger generations will inherit. Other alternative economic paradigms have been proposed, but few are as relevant to long-term sustainability. After reading *Shoveling Fuel*, one cannot help but stop chanting the perpetual growth mantra at least temporarily. To quote Aldo Leopold, "Nothing could be more salutary at this stage than a little healthy contempt for a plethora of material blessings." Perhaps a little "healthy contempt" for perpetual economic growth will turn the lone hymn of the steady state into a chorus of sustainability for the future. ■

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American Labor's Surrender to Immigration

Roots of a historic reversal

Book Review by David Simcox

Sometimes even the most obvious truths can be confounded by self-interested ideologues and dilettantes of political correctness.

Vernon Briggs describes expertly in *Immigration and American Unionism* how America's labor organizations, from the pre-civil war National Labor Union to today's AFL-CIO, have generally thrived in times of low or declining immigration and struggled in periods of mass immigration. Working people, millions of whom are not union members, have also thrived or struggled in lock step with the fortunes of unions, as shown in data on real wages and distribution of income, and in the current wage stagnation of our own mass immigration era.

Immigration and American Unionism
by Vernon M. Briggs Jr.
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
213 pages, $37.50, cloth; $16.95, paper

For a century and a half leaders of American labor have recognized this connection. Masses of new workers imported at will by a U.S. government doing employers' bidding — or recruited by the employers themselves — have undercut union bargaining power, helped break strikes, and made organizing harder. These simple, obvious facts until now have underlain American Labor's consistent opposition to mass immigration.

Labor's willingness to proclaim that high immigration was bad for the American working man — unionized or not —was as compelling in its candor and accuracy as it was devoid of the conceits of political correctness. Samuel Gompers, himself an immigrant, had it right when he said "Immigration is, in its fundamental aspects, a labor problem." Even so Labor's concern more often than not has been either ignored or given only lip service by policy makers. The historical record of Labor's legislative victories from ending the Foreign Contract Labor law to the Chinese Exclusion Act to today's employer sanctions is a dismaying record of under-enforced mandates.

The economic interests that dominate politics at all levels of government more often get their way, not by overcoming unwelcome view points with reasoned debate, but by seeing to it that inconvenient issues such as immigration and the declining labor standards of American workers are kept off the agenda in the first place.

Briggs does not go into the strategy in detail, but his work reminds us that another book is needed to show how historically the business-dominated pro-immigration lobby has subtly co-opted the churches, charities, educators, ethnic groups, civil rights movement, internationalists, lots of well-intentioned but innocent Americans, and, most recently, even some labor leaders, in the prevailing ideology that immigration is pre-eminently a moral need, essential for the nation's spiritual and economic growth and demographic "success."

For Briggs, the much maligned restrictive immigration law of 1921 ushered in a golden age of American trade unionism that lasted until the 1965 Immigration Act reopened the doors to mass immigration. Between these two historic pieces of legislation the nearly fifty years of low immigration

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contributed to the rise of union membership — in numbers and as a percentage of the labor force — to its highest levels ever. Unions gained the most worker-friendly legislation they had ever know. Real wages expanded and income distribution moved toward greater balance.

Briggs' book could not be more timely. In the 1990s a radically new creature has been emerging in American labor history — a pro-immigration trade union movement, as startling as would be the emergence of the Republican party as the champion of redistributionist fiscal policy. Briggs is at his best in charting this weird turnabout. Organized Labor's changing priorities became apparent with the AFL-CIO's acquiescence in the 1990 immigration act, which increased legal immigration significantly, particularly in temporary worker categories. In 1996 Labor withheld its support for the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, whose stepped up deportations and limits on welfare to immigrants would probably have been hailed by Samuel Gompers as necessary measures to curb unfair competition by illegal workers and end implicit employment subsidies to employers who prefer low-wage legal immigrants.

"Briggs' book could not be more timely. In the 1990s a radically new creature has been emerging in American labor history — a pro-immigration trade union movement..."

The turnabout was completed in 1999 when the AFL-CIO made its first appeal for an end to the very employer sanctions it had led in demanding as far back as the early 1970s. Labor has since called for an amnesty for the up to eleven million illegal aliens who have accumulated since the 1986 amnesty, as many as seven million of whom are in the labor force.

How did the immigration reform movement's loss of one of its oldest co-belligerents come about? Briggs' analysis of the factors at work rings true. Civil rights and women's rights revolutions sensitized the AFL-CIO to more "inclusionary" approaches, a trend reinforced by the increasing clout of government employee unions within the federation. Major affiliated unions, such as the Service Employees and Hotel Workers, developed large Hispanic and immigrant constituencies that demanded more union involvement in immigrant issues. Labor had been losing membership in the 1970s and 1980s and seeking new numbers among immigrants became a survival strategy. Perhaps most persuasive to Labor was the demonstrated unwillingness of Washington to seriously enforce employer sanctions since their enactment in 1986 and to prevent the unfair job competition of illegals.

Briggs wonders, as will the reader, just how Labor's de facto surrender to continued illegal immigration will help increase unions' clout or improve the labor standards on those now working. Immigrants in the work place might be inclined to join unions in return for Labor's solidarity with them. But will that be enough to make a difference if subsequent waves of illegals are to provide the strike breakers and pools of nonunion workers that strengthen employers' hands?

Labor's claimed organizing victories among immigrants in services, construction, and light manufacturing often amount to little more than the replacement of unions that once represented well-paid workers, but which were obliterated by floods of low-wage immigrants, with new, largely immigrant unions earning half the pay of the 1980s. Briggs is clear about Labor's cruel dilemma:

> *Organized labor is at a crossroads. It can seek an expedient course and embrace mass immigration for political advantage, which it seems to be doing. But if it actually does so, it will have abandoned its traditional moral role as the advocate for the economic well-being of American workers. It cannot have it both ways.*

The author, who has spent much of his professional life thinking about declining unionism, offers a cogent and ambitious plan of action for improving the fortunes of labor and of the millions of working Americans who have benefited from its

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existence. The plan calls for a mix of legislative and regulatory changes in immigration and labor policies.

For Labor, Briggs would have far better enforcement of labor standards at the work place and reforms in labor-management legislation to end state "open-shop" laws and simplify and speed up union representation decisions in all industries.

His program for immigration will sound familiar and heartening to reformers: Adopt the precepts of the Jordan commission to reduce legal immigration and deemphasize family reunification; put refugees under an overall immigration ceiling; reform a seriously out-of-control political asylum process; and finally, begin serious enforcement of employer sanctions based on fraud-proof identification systems.

Labor's surrender to the mass-immigration coalition is a serious blow to immigration reform and to the dignity of American workers, but it need not be fatal. As always, there will be unions that do not follow AFL-CIO's lead. The refusal of many unionists to follow the federation's endorsement of the pro-immigration, Hispanic nationalist candidate Villaraigosa in Los Angeles' June mayoral election is an important display of resistance. Briggs' book is an essential education for those who care about this issue and its implications for the country. ■

Needed: Abolitionists

Sweatshops in the Los Angeles garment industry should be target of reform advocates

Book Review by David Simcox

The muckrakers of the early 20th century would feel kinship with the authors Bonacich and Appelbaum. Their book is not the mathematical sociologists' cautious tome pocketed with numbing regression tables, but an angry jeremiad again injustice, exploitation, racial manipulation and intimidation in the flourishing Los Angeles women's apparel industry. The muckrakers, though, would be disappointed and puzzled that the workplace abuses they helped expose in the Progressive era have crept back into American garment-making, food processing, agriculture, and other immigrant-employing industries with a virulence that matches the ugliness of the workplace a century ago.

Behind the Label: Inequality in the Los Angeles Apparel Industry
by Edna Bonacich and Richard E. Appelbaum
Berkeley, CA: University of California Press
395 pages, $22.50 paperback

This case study of the pathologies of a particular industry in a particular city (the authors are quick to note that San Francisco and even hard-boiled New York have had greater success in taming sweatshops) underscores a much broader question: Why is U.S. society turning away so mindlessly from the progressive heritage of high standards and fair play in the workplace, housing, public education, civic life, and the marketplace? Why have we become so complacent about lowering the values that gave America its envied qualities? And who or what is to blame for the sickness in Los Angeles?

Globalization and Old-Fashioned Greed

Bonacich and Appelbaum see a number of demons at work. There is of course "globalization" of the market for garments, a convenient reification if there ever was one to distance ourselves as consumers and investors from the facts of our own greed gone

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global. The abuses are greatest in the women's fashion industry with its high component of custom work and its demand for rapid adjustment to changing fads. (Producers of men's clothing have the market stability and capitalization to concede somewhat better wages and job security.) One outcome of globalization on the U.S. fashion industry has been the emergence of mass retailers and discounters such as Walmart, Dayton-Hudson, and Sears as "price-makers" who ruthlessly use oligopolistic power and their option to purchase or produce offshore to hold down the costs of the garments they demand from the manufacturer.

"...the tyranny of the contractor system is the ease with which it insulates employers from responsibility for their work forces."

With their reduced bargaining power, Los Angeles manufacturers, to keep their hefty profits, have little choice but to accept the retailers' terms and impose even tighter cost limits on the contractors who will actually make the garments. The contractors then pass the austerity along in spades to their powerless immigrant workers.

The lopsided distribution of the returns from sales display the wages of injustice. For a dress sold at retail for $100, the retailer gets $50.00, the manufacturer receives $35.00, the contractor gets $15, of which about $6.00 is split among the workers. Little wonder then that contractors forego such frills as the minimum wage, overtime, and stable hours.

The Contractor System: Ending Employer Responsibility

This citadel of exploitation has effectively resisted all attempts at change. Unions have a tough time organizing a frightened workforce with zero job security. The immediate employers use their contractor status to dodge responsibility for abysmal working conditions. Contractors are highly mobile and elusive. With little capital invested, they are free to abruptly close businesses, change locations, and reopen under new names, usually a step ahead of the union organizer or wage and hour inspector. Similarly, the manufacturer is able to shun any responsibility for the labor practices of his contractors and to transfer much of the risks of an unpredictable market to the contractors and their workers. The authors wearily conclude that the industry itself is structured to make sweatshops the norm rather than the exception.

As in America's corrupt perishable crop agriculture labor system, and more recently in the rising number of "body shops" contracting out foreign computer programmers, the tyranny of the contractor system is the ease with which it insulates employers from responsibility for their work forces. The authors also see racial manipulation by manufacturers in the industry's division of labor as a barrier against worker solidarity: the contractors are largely Asian and the shop workers largely Mexican and Central American.

Local Government: Coddling an Exploitive Industry

Retailers, manufacturers, and even some of the contractors are doing very well under this system. The Los Angeles garment industry, studded with politically-active and well connected millionaires, is lionized, coddled, and at times subsidized by Los Angeles area local governments, who bask in the city's renown as a "world fashion center." This fashion capital with the glitter of Hollywood draws free-spending visitors from around the world.

The authors estimate that the fashion industry in Los Angeles County employs over 150,000 workers. Perhaps a third of that number work in Orange and other neighboring counties. Two-thirds of women's apparel workers are women and more than seventy percent are undocumented. About a quarter to a third of the contractors are unregistered, underground shops. But the registered ones offer only marginally better labor conditions. The Labor Department estimates that sixty-one percent of registered firms are at some time during the year out of compliance with wage and hour laws.

Only the narrowest of visions allows Los Angeles and its satellite cities to value such a Dickensian industry so highly. They are using public power to

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preserve and encourage an industry in which in 1990 the average garment worker made $7,300 a year — a sum seventeen percent lower than what a minimum wage worker would earn working full-time for one year. This is an industry that stiffs its workers for more than $72 million a year in unpaid wages. All this hardly suggests the sort of desirable tax and consumer base that rational economic planners would covet.

One explanation is that much of the considerable cost of caring for and educating a deeply impoverished workforce and its dependents is left to the Federal government or to the State of California. The significant external costs that the industry imposes on local governments in the form of crowded housing, disease, and fire and safety code standards seem to be ignored on municipal balance sheets. The authors recall that the City of Los Angeles, alarmed by the prospect of the sweatshops going offshore, led in creating an advocacy organization, the California Fashion Association. The association had a "labor committee" packed with industry representatives, but no one representing labor.

Thus a public entity, the city, has helped to create an organization that is manifestly pro-business and anti-labor, reflecting the relative power and access of each (p. 274).

The Neo-Liberalism of L.A.'s Liberals

One startling contradiction the authors find is that the owners and beneficiaries of the Los Angeles fashion industry are not rock-ribbed laissez faire Republicans or Libertarians, but mostly liberal Democrats with considerable clout in the upper reaches of the party. Most are European-Americans, though Asian-Americans have made some inroads into the privileged circle. One is reminded of Max Weber's definition of ideology as "interest-based thought" when reading Bonacich and Appelbaum's discussion of the elaborate edifice of justification built by the professedly liberal employers and their defenders.

Exploitation? Quite the opposite. The employers claim to be rendering a vital service of providing jobs to poor, inexperienced, and unlettered immigrant workers. Many of these workers are not even worth the minimum wage, they argue. They would be altogether jobless and penniless if society insisted on imposing destructive wage and overtime obligations. And (naturally) the added costs would force the industry to transfer its work abroad. The industry thus deserves praise, not brickbats, for providing a vital entry-level foothold in the labor force for low-skilled newcomers to America.

"Really disturbing is that both the rapacious fashion industry giants and their high-minded critics implicitly assume that the profuse immigration of unskilled workers with zero bargaining power is a given — and America's moral duty is to accommodate."

Really disturbing is that both the rapacious fashion industry giants and their high-minded critics implicitly assume that the profuse immigration of unskilled workers with zero bargaining power is a given — and America's moral duty is to accommodate. How many of the poison fruits of U.S. immigration policy have been sanitized with the proposition: "They're going to come anyway"?

One might look here for a partial explanation as to why liberals in general have shown little enthusiasm for immigration reform. The intense opposition of the fashion industry's liberal elites to California's Proposition 187 shrewdly mixed idealism and cynical self-interest. They piously affirmed liberal cosmopolitan values while trying to derail what might slow the flow of powerless workers or reduce the government's share of their maintenance costs.

Blaming Immigration Controls and U.S. Foreign Policy

The Federal government is an accomplice, charge the authors, seeing immigration controls as devices for strengthening the hand of employers. In this view immigration status, like race, is used to perpetuate lower class status. The authors' answer: Abolish the very concept of "undocumented" and welcome

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newcomers and give them the full protection of law and unionization. Things now seem to be moving in the authors' direction. However, will a virtually open border have the effect of ameliorating some sweatshop conditions, but transform Los Angeles' manufacturing and service industries into sector-wide sweatshops?

The authors stretch it a bit when they try to make the Federal government doubly culpable, affirming that Washington's support for right wing military regimes in the immigrants' home countries supposedly destroyed democratic movements and social stability. You have to wonder about this reasoning. Would there have been no refugees and migrants if the United States had intervened in support of the revolutionaries, or had not intervened at all? The overwhelming mass of the industry's operatives come from Mexico, where there has been no U.S. military intervention since 1916, and where the society is becoming steadily more democratic, not less so.

Needed: A Latter-Day Abolition Movement

Perhaps without intending it, the authors show how the industry's workers are accomplices as well as victims in their own exploitation. They are vital strands in the recruiting network that brings a steady flow of new, powerless workers into the industry. For immigrant women often tied to the home by young children, sewing at home at even the paltriest of piecework pay means survival. So they cooperate with contractors to thwart federal and state inspectors. The attitude of most of the industry's workers is a stoic fatalism.

The book details the repeated, unavailing efforts of Federal and State labor, immigration, and safety standards inspectors to end the exploitation and assign responsibility for the abuses. Powerful fashion employers are shameless in their manipulations of local governments, state and federal legislators, and other influential entities to pressure the Labor Department and the Immigration Service to stop "overregulating" and damaging a "good business climate."

While the authors offer possible tactics for improving workers' bargaining power and manufacturers' accountability, they stress that sweatshops are a stubborn institution comparable to slavery and, like slavery, nothing less than a broad-based, multi-front "abolition" movement can extirpate them. The authors see promise of liberation in the growing coalition of labor, human rights, civic, and consumer organizations now pressuring retailers and manufacturers. But much of the movement's indignation is directed at exploiters overseas and in U.S. protectorates, diverting attention from the cancer of Los Angeles.

The Wages of Injustice for What?

The fashion industry in Los Angeles exemplifies the pathologies of a freewheeling, capitalist, high-consumption society. Mass immigration feeds an exploitive industry whose contribution to meeting human needs is millions of faddish female garments intended to be obsolete not long after purchase. In its supporting role, the advertising industry convinces American women that true attractiveness can only come through adherence to the latest styles. In the sweatshops, throwaway people produce throwaway clothing for insecure consumers, and the social, moral, and environmental costs are passed on to us all. ■

Truck Traffic Across the Mexican Border

President Vicente Fox of Mexico traveled through the Midwest in mid-July. On his stop in Detroit he discussed free-trade issues with the auto manufacturers and with labor union leaders.

Recently *The Wall Street Journal* took the unions to task for complaining about dangerous truck traffic across the Mexican border as though it was sour grapes about NAFTA and free trade.

Rep. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) responded to the *Journal* (letters, 18 July 2001) and affirmed the union "struggle to protect motorists from unsafe trucks that fail to meet minimum safety standards."

Brown indicated that eighty-two House Republicans had refused to support the president on a move to open the border because so many safety experts, insurance agents, and independent truck drivers had testified about legitimate concerns.

The *Journal* had reported that 36 percent of Mexican trucks had failed inspection at the border in 2000, but failed to mention that only one percent of 4.5 million trucks had been inspected.

"Mexico knew about these standards when it entered NAFTA, " Brown wrote, "Yet more than five years later it still lacks a commercial licensing system for truck drivers or a limit on the number of hours one driver may be on the road."

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The Dark Side of Globalization

Sharp thinking about humanity's future

Books Reviewed by Mark Wegierski

Robert Kaplan's new book, *Dreams of the Post Cold War* is a collection of essays by a social observer, world traveler, and prolific commentator. Except for the last essay, they have previously appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* and other publications, including the keynote piece, "The Coming Anarchy" (originally published in February 1994). In the book's introduction, Kaplan says of that article: "The concrete reality of the phenomenon it describes is undeniable: For every sixty-five dollars earned in rich countries, one dollar is earned in poor ones, and the gap is widening. That division is not only between North and South, but within countries and regions themselves, including the United States, where an upper-middle techno-class joins the global economy, while a vast realm of the citizenry has seen little rise in their salaries and owns no stocks or mutual funds." (p. xiii)

Dreams of the Post Cold War
by Robert D. Kaplan
New York: Random House/ Vintage Books
198 pages, $12.00 trade paperback

Turbo-Capitalism: Winners and Losers in the Global Economy
by Edward Luttwak
New York: HarperCollins Perennial
290 pages, $15.00 trade paperback

Kaplan's main outlook can be seen as that of realism and pessimism, recognizing the importance of limits and natural constraints on human possibilities. He writes that West Africa is becoming *the* symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real "strategic" danger. Disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, increasing erosion of national borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism. West Africa provides an appropriate introduction to the issues, often extremely unpleasant to discuss, that will soon confront our civilization... It is Thomas Malthus, the philosopher of demographic doomsday, who is now the prophet of West Africa's future. And West Africa's future, eventually, will also be that of most of the rest of the world (pp. 7-9).

Kaplan rejects liberal utopianism, and particularly its stress on "democracy" as a proper response to these emerging mega-crises. Rather, he argues for so-called "hybrid" regimes that will be mostly authoritarian, while offering prosperity and security to their citizens. Indeed, he says that the U.S. itself may have to evolve into such a "hybrid" regime.

The last, very weighty essay in the collection, "The Dangers of Peace" (pp. 169-185), extensively cites Ortega y Gasset (but is also clearly based on Nietzsche's thought). Its main theme is to point to the dangers of the over-satiated, consumerist mass-society. The ongoing struggle for a more ecological world is seen as a possible vehicle in advanced societies for avoiding the sated, banal "Last Man" existence: A world of natural limits, in which clean air and water and fecund soil were highly prized commodities, might impose a sense of warlike reality upon us, preventing us from becoming barbarian mass men, yet without requiring the citizenry to fight [in wars]. What we should be skeptical of are the

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"benefits" of a world at peace with unlimited natural resources. As Ortega y Gasset reminds us, "Nobility is synonymous with a life of effort" (p. 184). So — while it can sometimes have catastrophic dimensions in societies of the planet's South — natural scarcity may be something that maintains our sense of humanity. Should an advanced society ever discover some virtually unlimited energy source, it might well eventually become extinct through hyper-decadence and enervation.

Kaplan's embrace of realism and pessimism about the human condition, and his belief in natural limits, are clearly more truly conservative than the outlooks of most U.S. conservatives and neoconservatives, with their "international human rights" crusades, growth-mania, economism, and attacks on Third World family-planning programs. Kaplan well articulates a possible new synthesis of ideas centered on ecological, demographic, consumption-society, national-identity, and power-politics issues.

Edward Luttwak is an eclectic theorist extensively exploring the interrelationships between economic and social matters. His book (which originally appeared in 1998 in Great Britain) is, to a large extent, an indictment of the "turbo-capitalism" that is increasingly gripping the planet. He contrasts this with the "controlled capitalism" of the late 1940s to 1970s, which delivered unprecedented, almost universal, prosperity to the United States, Western Europe, and Japan. He argues that in each of those societies there were different mechanisms (such as regulation in the U.S.), for controlling the excesses of capitalism, while allowing societies to reap most of its benefits. Today, however, the U.S., U.K., Europe, and even Japan, are moving in the direction of "turbo-capitalism."

According to Luttwak, the U.S., which is particularly advanced along this road, is characterized by increasing inequalities of wealth and income. For example, in 1994, the top five percent of households received 21.2 percent of aggregate income, which is an increase from 16.8 percent in 1977. Aggregate income for the bottom twenty percent of the population had declined from 4.2 percent in 1977, to 3.6 percent in 1994; and for the next twenty percent of the population from 10.2 percent in 1977 to 8.9 percent in 1994 (p. 89). There is a trend not only of comparatively greater poverty in lower socio-economic groups, but also of the shrinking of the broader middle classes, while the top one percent of the U.S. population becomes ever wealthier.

"The corporate downsizing that was so popular in the 1990s has had extensive social costs... Many blue-collar workers had their lives devastated by being laid off from industrial plants, which virtually threw them onto the margins of society."

The corporate downsizing that was so popular in the 1990s has had extensive social costs. The reason for the low U.S. unemployment rates of the mid-to late-1990s, according to Luttwak, is that wages had been driven down as the profile of the job market changed from relatively well-paying industrial and clerical jobs to poorly-paying service sector jobs, with a thin layer of well-paying high-tech jobs at the top. Many blue-collar workers had their lives devastated by being laid off from industrial plants, which virtually threw them onto the margins of society. At the same time, numerous mundane white-collar jobs (for example, in middle management) were eliminated, thus pushing middle class persons to a reduced status. Since comparatively overqualified persons were competing for borderline service sector jobs, the people in even lower socioeconomic categories were further marginalized and alienated. In the high-tech economy, the industrial plant jobs that almost any healthy, physically strong person could do continued to disappear. The Old Economy giants were laying workers off, but the New Economy giants needed only comparatively small numbers of employees, virtually all of whom had to have extensive, prestige education. So most of the new employment was actually in the ever-larger service sector. There were also such phenomena where, for

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example, clerical workers were laid off (losing all their benefits), and then hired as temporary workers, sometimes even by the same company.

Luttwak argues that although unemployment in Continental Europe is at times very high by U.S. standards (e.g., around twelve percent), those societies offer certain compensations in return, for example, high wages, job security (for those workers who have jobs), extensive holidays for workers, a greater sense of social continuity and family stability, and so forth. Although Luttwak does not make this connection, it could be argued that a European-style welfare state is far easier to maintain in comparatively homogenous, low-immigration societies, where the feelings of common nationhood, kinship, and destiny make the economic impositions of the welfare state seem less onerous. There may indeed be a correlation between the most turbo-capitalist societies in the region (e.g., the U.K.) and high immigration.

Another alternative model to the U.S. is Japan, which has almost full employment, but very high prices for consumers, including various highly restrictive practices to block foreign imports. The Japanese are clearly willing to accept various economic costs for the sake of greater social cohesion and harmony. Luttwak perhaps underplays the importance of Japan's almost one hundred percent homogeneity and its deep cultural traditions of hard work, frugality, and self-sacrifice *for Japan*, in allowing Japanese society to maintain a full-employment ethos. Japan has achieved its economic miracle without mass immigration from abroad, nor is any likely to be allowed in the future.

Luttwak also does not devote enough attention to the role of immigration, legal and illegal, in exacerbating inequalities in America, although many of his points have an immigration dimension — for example, when he writes about "The Return of the Servants" (pp. 85-90) (wealthy households in the U.S. now being able to hire extensive domestic help). High levels of immigration increase employment pressure on almost all native-born Americans, including those from the most marginalized groups, who might have greater chances if the labor market were not being continually undercut.

Although Luttwak argues that turbo-capitalism and globalization are not entirely coterminous phenomena, this book could be given a place of honor alongside the many critiques of globalization of the last decade. ■

Stop Mass Immigration Now

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, for the time period 1981-1999 there were 16,380,275 immigrants admitted into the United States. That is enough new people to build more than 163 new cities of 100,000 population. These numbers do not include the estimated 375,000 to 425,000 illegal immigrants who sneak in every year.

The INS reports that from 1925 to 1965 we accepted an average of 178,000 legal immigrants per year. During the decade of the 1990s we let in an average of 914,155 per year.

Our population in 1990 was 248,709,873. The 2000 census shows 281,275,000 — an increase of 33 million. Nearly two-thirds of our yearly population growth comes from new immigrants and their offspring.

Population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau call for our population to jump from today's 281 million to 300 million in 2081, and to reach 571 million in 2100. This high rate of growth is causing problems for our cities, schools, highways, national parks as well as the loss of prime farmland and fresh water.

This scenario doesn't have to happen. Congress has the power to change our immigration laws and slow our population growth. Every poll I have seen in newspapers and magazines shows that between 65 percent and 83 percent of those surveyed favor cutbacks in immigration to about 200,000 per year.

Let's restore some of the limits and guidelines that once insured that immigration could help rather than overwhelm America. There are several bills before Congress at this time to deal with immigration policy. If you are concerned, contact your congress-member today.

We don't need mass immigration. Get involved before it's too late.

PAUL WESTRUM
Albert Lea, Minnesota

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Economic Man's Hollow Victory?

Book Review by Wayne Lutton

In his annual paean to mass immigration, *Wall Street Journal* editor Robert Bartley gave his hearty endorsement to Mexican President Vincente Fox's call for essentially abolishing the border between his country and the United States. Indeed, Bartley reminded his readers that the *WSJ* first called for a constitutional amendment: "There shall be open borders" in 1984 [R. Bartley, "Open Nafta Borders? Why Not?" *Wall Street Journal*, July 2, 2001, p. A15].

The folks at Dow Jones & Company view the United States not as a sovereign nation populated by a citizenry whose interests should be its foremost concern, but rather as simply a part of a global economic order. The *WSJ*'s "solution to the problem of illegal immigration is to make it legal...."

Economism and the National Prospect
by John Attarian
Monterey, VA: American Immigration Control Foundation
(PO Box 525, Monterey, VA 24465
72 pages, $6.00

To John Attarian, an economist and historian, the *WSJ* position is evidence of the baleful influence of what he dubs "economism" — the reduction of humans to economic animals and the subservience of human activity to economics. If "economic efficiency" trumps all else, then a particular country and its people have no interests that deserve protection and preservation.

Although it is unfashionable in many circles, Dr. Attarian is a patriot. His concern is: "what is best for my country? Is it good for America to subordinate everything to affluence, efficiency, and profit maximization? To depend upon foreign-born 'human capital?' To pour in immigrants to cut labor costs, even if it impoverishes American labor, and promotes America's Balkanization, and other noneconomic consequences?"

Economism and the National Prospect is an expansion of Dr. Attarian's seminal essay of the same title published in *The Social Contract* (Vol. X, No. 2, Winter 1999-2000).

After reviewing the essential characteristics of "economism," the author goes on to consider how its advocates influence current immigration policy debates. Immigrants, both unskilled and select professionals (such as in the computer industry), are seen as a renewable source of cheap labor and profit maximization. That mass immigration may hurt native-born workers, or lead to cultural disharmony and political strife matter little, if at all, to believers in "economism."

In chapter seven, Dr. Attarian deals with the economic unworkability of economism. Leading advocates of economism deny the very concept of limitations. A prime representative of this school is William O'Keefe, Executive Vice-President of the American Patroleum Institute, who proclaimed "There Are No Limits to Growth" and scorned "the bogus finite resources argument."

John Attarian sees the U. S. economy as "a giant inverted pyramid, piling rising burdens on a narrow, and weakening, energy, environmental and resource base; top-heavy, hideously vulnerable, giving hostages to fortune...Obvious consequences of growthmania and gluttony are resource exhaustion and environmental ruin, which will eventually cause economic decline."

John Attarian challenges us to make a difficult choice. He is confident that Americans can reject "economism." But, like a drug addict, withdrawal will be difficult and not without pain. ■

Wayne Lutton, Ph.D., is editor of The Social Contract.

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The Bulletin Board

Immigration on the Internet

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT journal now has a research site by which all the articles published in previous issues of the journal are available at <www.thesocialcontract.com>.

Below are some additional sites that readers may find of interest. Listing them here does not imply that *The Social Contract* endorses the material on any specific site.

- The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR): www.fairus.org.
- Immigration by the Numbers: www.numbersusa.com.
- ProEnglish: www.proenglish.org.
- A new voice for population/environment issues: www.sprawlcity.org.
- Center for Immigration Studies: www.cis.org.
- Affirmative Action for Immigrants: www.pw2.netcom.com/~jimrobb.
- Comments from Peter Brimelow, Joseph Fallon and others: www.vdare.com.
- News and commentary on ethnic and other conflicts worldwide: www.antiwar.com.
- Carrying Capacity Network: www.carryingcapacity.org.
- Negative Population Growth: www.npg.org.
- California Coalition for Immigration Reform: www.ccir.net.
- Philip Martin's *Migration News:* www.migration.ucdavis.edu.
- Professor Norman Matloff:: www.heather.cs.ucdavis.edu /pub/Immigration/Index.html.
- Midwest Coalition for Responsible Immigration: www.enteract.com/~mcri97.
- Sierrans for US Population Stabilization: www.susps.org.
- A parody site: www.sierraclubbed.com.
- *People and Place* is published in Australia by the Centre for Population and Urban Research: www.elecpress.monash.edu.au/pnp.
- Canadian Immigration Reform Committee: www.canadafirst.net.
- Voices of Citizens Together: www.americanpatrol.com.
- Council of Conservative Citizens: www.cofcc.org.
- Columnist Samuel Francis: www.samfrancis.net.
- The Biocentric Institute: www.iapm.org/biocenter.html.
- Stalking the Wild Taboo: www.lrainc.com/swtaboo/.
- ProjectUSA: www.projectusa.org.
- The European Forum for Migration Studies: www.uni-bamberg.de/~ba6ef3/home.html.
- Floridians for a Sustainable Population: www.flsuspop.org/index.htm.
- Population and Sustainability: www.ecofuture.org/ecofuture/populat.html.
- American Renaissance: www.amren.com.
- *Mankind Quarterly:* www.mankind.org.
- Federal Publications (developments in immigration law): http://www.fedpub.com/fedpub/immigrat.htm.

E-mail addresses for pertinent organizations:

- Center for Immigration Studies (CIS): center@cis.org.
- Negative Population Growth: npg@npg.org.
- Carrying Capacity Network: ccn@igc.apc.org.
- Californians for Population Stabilization (CAPS): caps@cap-s.org.
- Conservative News Links: newsclips-subscribe@egroups.com.

And from the perspective of the opposition and their stand for open borders:

- The American Immigration Lawyers Association: www.aila.org.

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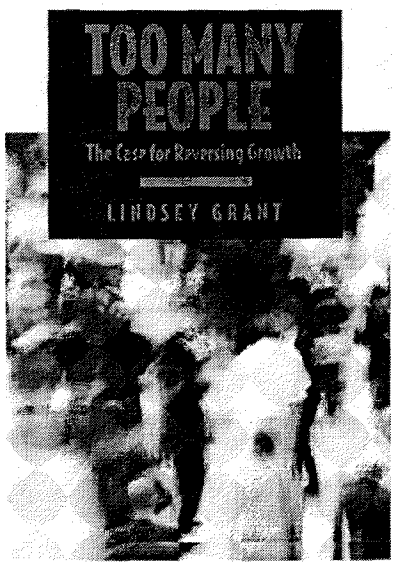
TOO MANY PEOPLE

THE CASE FOR REVERSING GROWTH

LINDSEY GRANT



"All great truths begin as heresy. Lindsey Grant is a heretical prophet. He proves it again by his new book. When the histories of these times are written, they will show him to be one of the few people understanding the future."

— Richard D. Lamm
Governor of Colorado, 1975-1987

This book explores a fundamental but seldom asked question: Has the recent growth of human numbers and economic activity imperiled our well-being, social justice, and even the natural support systems on which we and other creatures depend? Challenging a nearly universal enthusiasm for endless growth, Grant makes the unassailable point that perpetual material growth on Earth is a mathematical absurdity. Growth, moreover, is already an unrecognized root of environmental and social problems, not simply a potential danger.

Grant summarizes the evidence concerning food, water, land, climate change, the energy transition, chemicals, and pollution and their threat to living systems. He recognizes — indeed emphasizes — the limits of our knowledge, but he suggests, in broad terms, what world population might be sustainable at a decent standard of living. The numbers are something like those the world passes two or three centuries ago.

Politicians, planners, and environmentalists usually treat population growth as an independent variable to which they must adjust, rather than as a factor that must be changed if a real solution to their problem is to be found. *Too Many People* is a highly readable, concise handbook about the greatest threat facing humanity today — itself.

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